



International
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▶ Two decades of national employment policies 2000-2020

Part I: Employment policy design:
Lessons from the past, policies for
the future

Eléonore D'Achon





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► Preface

Work is central to people's lives, societies and economies.

- *"Securing decent work for men and women everywhere is the most widespread need, shared by people, families and communities in every society, and at all levels of development. Decent work is a global demand today, confronting political and business leadership worldwide. Much of our common future depends on how we meet this challenge".¹*

Paid work, or employment – whether wage employment or self-employment – is the main means of access to income for the vast majority of the population. It is therefore the main mechanism through which the benefits of economic growth can be redistributed, and social justice promoted. Employment, consequently, has a strong qualitative aspect – people aspire, not to any employment, but 'decent' employment. Beyond meeting material needs, decent employment is a means to achieving individual self-esteem and social inclusion.

Today, the world of work is profoundly affected by technological change, climate change and demographic shifts, and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social disruption unleashed by this pandemic has particularly affected labour markets and jobs. As countries recover from this crisis, addressing unemployment, inadequate earnings and other forms of exclusion, discrimination and inequality in the labour market, all of which have been compounded by the current COVID-19 crisis, will be of paramount importance. Active public policies in the sphere of employment – employment policies – are critical in this context.

An increasing number of countries are turning to the ILO for assistance on employment policies, as it is particularly well positioned to play a leading role in this area. It has the legitimacy, given its tripartite structure (governments, workers and employers), and its standard-setting mandate. It has a strong normative base, and the experience, the knowledge and the policy instruments which are deeply rooted in the Convention on Employment Policy (No. 122) which was adopted by member States in 1964. In the 1970s, the ILO World Employment Programme made major contributions to the understanding of the variety of employment situations, and recognized that employment issues could not be addressed through labour market interventions alone. In the late 1990s, the ILO Decent Work Agenda provided a strong conceptual platform as well as the requisite instruments for *"effectively 'promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity"*.² On this basis, since the early 2000s, the ILO has increasingly been assisting countries to support the development of integrated employment policies, leveraging all instruments to increase the capacity of the economy to create decent jobs: macroeconomic and sectoral policies, labour market institutions and programmes, private sector development, skills development and employment services. Social dialogue is an integral element of ILO's approach to reach consensus on relevant active policies and programmes and provide full and productive employment to all women and men.

In 2015, the 2030 Development Agenda of the UN rightly prioritized full and productive employment in its Goal 8. In 2020, to align better with the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019), the Employment Policy Department launched the new generation of national employment policies (NEP 2.0), with a stronger focus on gender responsiveness, youth employment, demand-side policies, future of work drivers, as well as on implementation and monitoring of NEPs.

The experience of the ILO in working with member states on employment policies in the last two decades has major learnings for the office and member States. It was therefore noted by the ILO Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment in 2010, and again in 2014, that these lessons are documented,

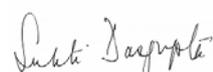
¹ Report of the Director-General, ILC 87th session, 1999.

² *Decent Work*, Report of the Director-General, 87th Session, ILO, Geneva, 1999, International Labour Conference.

analysed and made available in an easy format for future reference. Based on this recommendation, the Employment Policy Gateway³ was set up, to facilitate the sharing of information on employment policies. This database has involved painstaking work by many colleagues over the years, and is an excellent resource for policy analysts and policy makers. It is being launched together with this study, and complements this study on “Two decades of national employment policies (2000-2020): Lessons from the past, policies for the future”.

While the basic elements of integrated national employment policies are generally well known, many questions still arise, such as what types of policy mix work best in which contexts? What is the most effective design process? What are the best systems to implement and monitor the multidimensional nature of employment policies? How to ensure that employment policies lead to concrete results? How to assess the impact of employment policies? Based on ILO’s experience in designing and delivering employment policies, this study seeks to shed some light on these questions by providing an overview and analysis of the policies adopted and implemented in 69 countries. It aims to provide governments, social partners and employment practitioners with a global and long-term perspective on employment policy content, design and processes in different country situations, based on lessons learnt from two decades of ILO’s work on national employment policies across the globe. Employment policy processes depend on the unique circumstances of each country, and each country faces different opportunities and constraints when it comes to developing or implementing an employment policy. However, beyond this diversity, this study seeks to identify the common elements of the successes and challenges observed over the past 20 years, with a view to sharing lessons, improving the formulation and implementation of national employment policies (NEPs), and strengthening the capacity of the tripartite constituents and other NEP stakeholders to develop employment policies and effectively translate them into practical actions.

The global changes affecting the world of work today with the COVID-19 crisis have once again pushed full and productive employment to the centre of the global and national agenda. How countries recover from the adverse impact of the crisis, based on human-centred processes that create new opportunities for building back better and fairer, will be conditional on appropriate public policy responses. The successes and challenges of ILO’s 20 years of experience in supporting the formulation of employment policies may shed light on the way forward and offer practical suggestions for the future.



Sukti Dasgupta
Chief, Employment, Labour Markets
and Youth Branch

³ The ILO Employment Policy Gateway is available at: www.ilo.org/empolgateway

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This report is the reflection of the work of numerous ILO employment specialists at Headquarters and in the field, to design, deliver and track employment policies across the world over 2000-2020. It is impossible to mention them all here by name, but this report would not have been possible without their commitment to employment policies over many years. The report has gone into successive rounds of internal reviews to ensure a reflection of experience of all regional contexts. Almost 30 employment specialists commented on it. Bernd Mueller, Mauricio Dierckxsens and Yadong Wang provided comments, substantive inputs and country examples throughout the preparation process. Christoph Ernst, Kee Beom Kim, Maria Prieto, Michael Mwasikakata, Jean Ndenzako, Gerhard Reinecke, Aurelio Parisotto, Felix Weidenkaff, Sharon Chitambo, Dino Corell, Julia Surina, Diego Rei, David Marcos, Ali Madai Boukar, Kazutochi Chatani, Gerson Martinez, Tariq Haq, Daniela Zampini, Woon Kyong Kang, Vicky Leung, Yashar Hamzayev, Aya Jafaar, Concepcion Sardaña, Nomaan Majid, Luca Fedi and Jealous Chirove provided relevant inputs, country examples and insightful comments. Special thanks to Mariela Dyrberg for the layout and the cover design.

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► Executive Summary

This report shows how the world was already facing a number of persisting challenges when the COVID-19 crisis hit. Past decades have been characterized by a trend of decreasing employment content and it has been difficult in most countries to create enough decent jobs to keep all those available and willing to work employed. And for an increasing segment of workers, the quality of employment has also suffered, including with the proliferation of more insecure forms of work. Inequality in the distribution of earnings from work as well as the unequal distribution of the benefits from the growth of income has also become a major concern.

Strong policy responses are needed to reverse these trends, which are being further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, the ILO argues for a comprehensive and explicit approach to employment based on the recognition that markets alone cannot trigger sufficient employment outcomes in quantity and in quality. Rather, the nature of the employment problem is directly linked to the patterns of economic and social development. Addressing labour market issues requires governments to formulate comprehensive packages of training, industrial, macroeconomic, trade, social and labour market policies, as well as strengthening institutions to shape this process. The ILO is mandated to promote this effort based on a number of principles enshrined in the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) and other instruments. On this basis, the ILO is assisting a growing number of countries to design, deliver, monitor and evaluate national employment policies (NEPs). These policies can take various forms depending on the country situation, including standalone, comprehensive national policy documents.

Mounting concern about employment has led an increasing number of countries in all regions and at different levels of development to promote such policies and express their commitment towards the objective of more and better employment for all. Indeed, the report shows that the number of countries that have adopted standalone NEPs – or are in the process of doing so – has tripled over the last two decades. NEPs have proven to be successful entry points in response to crises, including the Arab Spring and the global financial crisis. The latter clearly marked a turning point – not only in terms of the number of NEPs adopted but also in the make-up of employment policies, refocussing on the need for multidimensional employment policies addressing both supply- and demand-side issues. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic is placing employment policies at the forefront again, with NEPs in many countries providing a solid policy and institutional footing to develop immediate COVID responses, as well as to promote recovery and strengthen the resilience of labour markets in the long run.

NEPs are an evidence-based policy tool drawing on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the labour market, as well as on broad-based social dialogue. As an integrated approach to tackling demand and supply challenges in the labour market, NEP design processes are not only bringing ministries of labour and employment, but also other ministries, along with social partners and other stakeholders, to arrive at consensus-based solutions. Over the years, social dialogue to support NEP design has undergone changes in its scope, content and depth. First, on the ground, NEP design processes have had a positive impact on the dialogue between governments and social partners. With the passage of time, the latter have seen their positions strengthened through participation in NEP processes. They have also become better equipped and more active in the relationship. Secondly, the number of stakeholders associated with NEP design has grown over the years beyond ministries of labour and social partners to embrace various actors that play a role in shaping employment solutions. At the same time, including more diverse actors in these processes (from sectoral ministries and central banks to vulnerable groups) encourages ownership and shared responsibility of those who have a bearing on employment. Various NEP processes are also opening up opportunities for citizens' voices, especially those of youth. Thirdly, the review not only shows a greater diversity of actors associated with NEP processes, but also more in-depth engagement throughout the years, in particular from ministries of economy and finance, which, in some countries, have started to take a key role in facilitating NEP design and ensuring that other parties contribute to the process.

Stakeholders' engagement in policy design entails information/notification, consultation and participation. Findings show that these three have improved. In addition to more intensive information provision, communication and consultation methods have also changed over time, extending the scope of participation and creating more and better opportunities to raise and extend awareness and debates on employment issues, within the NEP stakeholders themselves, but also among the general public. In many countries, ad-hoc policy committees have been established to secure broad engagement of stakeholders by creating new coordination paths between actors that were not used to interacting. Those have been complemented by other means of securing stakeholders' engagement. Processes have become more complex and have involved new participative methodologies, as well as a greater mix of methods, to create the necessary level of participation by different stakeholders. NEP design processes are also benefitting from stronger political backing over the years – which proves to be key to orchestrating a wide range of partners and incentivizing other parties to buy into NEP processes. Finally, another significant trend is the shift from centralized processes towards a regional approach to employment. While early employment policies tended to mainly represent the 'views of the capital', recent processes have taken a devolved approach, bringing consultations, dialogue and decision-making closer to local actors.

The experience drawn from 69 countries shows that the formulation of employment policies is a process that – well beyond the organization of consultation workshops – involves ongoing advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, the forging of strategic partnerships and alliances, and continuous support to strengthen capacities and institutions. Looking back over twenty years of employment policies, this review shows that the design process itself is as important as producing the final public policy. This paper explores how the process helped to shift mindsets on NEP partner's respective roles in dealing with employment challenges, strengthened national institutions, facilitated collective learning processes, opened up opportunities for new coordination and enhanced social dialogue and policy coherence to arrive at shared ownership of these solutions. Bringing on board a wide range of stakeholders, employment policies are increasingly becoming an agreed framework that describes the collective employment vision, not only for national stakeholders, but also for development partners.

Despite progress made, some challenges remain, including in terms of reaching out to some specific groups such as rural and informal workers, further building capacities of social partners and ministries of employment and reinforcing institutions. Ensuring engagement and persuading officials across institutions, not only to participate, but commit and buy into the need for an NEP, are also key issues for future action. Another important challenge and focus for the years to come will be to learn from past experiences while building innovative NEP design cycles, including more responsive policy formulation processes that allow for faster improvement and policy adjustment – as the COVID-19 pandemic and increasingly uncertain contexts require fast and continually evolving policy responses.

Designing and adopting policies is only half the battle. Part II of this publication will focus on the results of such participatory processes and how they shape the content of national employment policies. Finally, Part III will focus on implementation and to what extent employment policies go hand-in-hand with adequate resource allocation, institutions and new ways of working to effectively transform goals into actions and deliver on the NEP requirements.

► Introduction

Employment has become a major concern worldwide: for the low-income countries, middle-income countries and high-income economies alike. Before the COVID-19 crisis, it was estimated that the number of unemployed people exceeded 190 million. Another major concern is the difficulty of creating quality jobs: 1.4 billion workers were estimated to be in vulnerable employment, and an additional 166 million people were in employment but wished to work more paid hours. Many other dimensions of decent work (security, dignity, income, protection) remain unsatisfied for a large part of the population, and forecasts for the coming years do not ease the concerns regarding the capacity of the economy to create decent work for all.

Against this backdrop, the COVID-19 crisis has, in a matter of months, become the most severe economic and labour market downturn since the Second World War. ILO estimates point to a significant rise in unemployment, underemployment and inactivity in the wake of the crisis that translates into a substantial loss of income for workers and revenue for businesses around the world. In addition to massive workplace closures, working-hour losses in 2020 are estimated to have reached 8.8 per cent, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs, lower- and middle-income countries being the hardest hit. The ongoing crisis has a disproportionate impact on certain segments of the population hence exacerbating pre-existing employment challenges.⁴

Change and concern are not confined to employment and labour market situations. Indeed, in a global context marked by growing uncertainties, the risk of social unrest has increased in many countries. In this context, there are calls from across the globe for new priorities, reflected in a shift from a mere focus on growth and poverty reduction to sustainable and inclusive economic growth leading to full employment and decent work for all. Employment has featured on the international agenda for at least one hundred years, since the International Labour Organization was created. Beyond the ILO, however, it has often been seen as secondary to, or a natural consequence of, economic growth. Over the last few years, multilateral organizations and other development partners have joined the ILO in supporting a reorientation in favour of employment.

In 2008, recognizing that decent, productive work for all is a vital element in the alleviation of poverty, the United Nations added a new target related to employment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It called on all countries to monitor progress made, by reporting data for four new employment indicators. In the face of growing challenges, the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, and endorsed by 193 countries, give employment issues even more space and recognize that, for growth to be more inclusive, everybody must be able to participate on an equal footing in the labour market. More specifically, Goal 8 is to: “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Among the targets, several specifically deal with employment issues: decent job creation; full and productive employment; gender equality in relation to work; the elimination of wage discrimination; a reduction in the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training; the elimination of child labour by 2025; the protection of labour rights and the improvement of working conditions; and the implementation of measures to promote youth employment. Employment is also instrumental in the achievement of several other of the 17 Goals, such as to end poverty (SDG 1), to reduce inequalities (SDG 10) and to achieve gender equality (SDG 5).

The new SDGs testify to the growing engagement of the international community in favour of employment. It also clearly acknowledges that the four pillars of decent work – the promotion of employment, respect for international labour standards, social protection, and social dialogue – are key dimensions and prerequisites of inclusive economic development.

Several other examples illustrate this renewal of interest. These include, notably, the innovative joint commitment made in 2010 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Labour Office to

⁴ International Labour Organization. ILO Monitor: “COVID-19 and the world of work”. Seventh edition. 25 January 2021.

promote employment.⁵ Since 2008, the G20 leaders have granted increasing space to employment, with several summits⁶ dedicated to these issues. In particular, the Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth marked a turning point, by recognizing the role that the State can and should play in promoting employment. There has also been greater emphasis placed on employment by the World Bank during the past decade, as illustrated by its 2013 annual report dedicated specifically to jobs,⁷ its World Development Report 2019 on the changing nature of work, as well as its numerous programmes to support employment in the countries in which it works. A similar reorientation can be seen in the priorities and activities of the regional development banks.

At regional level, countries have also made commitments in favour of employment. The European Employment Strategy (EES) dates back to 1997, when the EU Member States undertook to establish a set of common objectives and targets for employment policy. The implementation of the EES – the main aim of which is the creation of more and better jobs throughout the EU – involves the following four steps: (i) employment guidelines which are common priorities and targets for employment; (ii) the [Joint Employment Report](#) which is based on (a) the assessment of the employment situation in Europe (b) the implementation of the Employment Guidelines and (c) an assessment of the Scoreboard of key employment and social indicators, (iii) the [National Reform Programmes \(NRPs\)](#) which are submitted by national governments and analysed by the Commission for compliance with Europe 2020, and (iv) based on the assessment of the NRPs, the Commission publishes a series of [country reports](#), analysing member states' economic policies and issues country specific recommendations.⁸ In 2004, the Extraordinary Summit held in Ouagadougou adopted a declaration on employment and poverty alleviation in Africa, a plan of action for the promotion of employment and poverty alleviation and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. This was followed by the adoption of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa which provides a framework to deepen the practical implementation of decent work in Africa. Ten years later, this commitment was reiterated by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government which adopted new policy instruments for the following decade.⁹ The objective of job creation has been restated more recently in the Agenda 2063 for Africa.¹⁰ More specifically, some country groupings in Africa are developing employment policy frameworks to guide and promote coherence between employment policy processes at regional level. In 2016, the Southern African Development Community (SADC)¹¹ adopted a Youth Employment Promotion Policy Framework to guide SADC Member States on an integrated and coherent approach to realizing decent employment for youth in the region. In 2013, the countries of Latin America reaffirmed, in the Declaration of Medellin, that decent work, productive employment and social inclusion should be the cross-cutting objectives of economic and social policies, and committed their Ministers of Labour to an action plan.¹² In 2016, the Bali Declaration was adopted at the 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting to promote decent work as a means to foster inclusive growth, social justice and sustainable development.¹³

Employment is also occupying an increasingly important position in countries' policy agendas. While decent work deficits persist across the world, governments now commonly agree that growth represents just one aspect of economic development, and that it is vital to take an interest in the quality of growth. Employment policies are one of the main avenues for government to deliver on their promises of more quality employment for all. As discussed in this paper, over the last twenty years, an increasing number of countries

⁵ IMF/International Labour Office (2010) and IMF (2013).

⁶ Pittsburgh (2009), Toronto (2010) and Saint Petersburg (2013).

⁷ World Bank (2012).

⁸ See <https://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>

⁹ See https://www.ilo.org/africa/areas-of-work/labour-migration/policy-frameworks/WCMS_671951/lang-en/index.htm

¹⁰ See <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf>

¹¹ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a Regional Economic Community comprising 16 Member States: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

¹² Organization of American States. 2013b. "2013 Plan of Action of Medellin: 50 Years of Inter-American Dialogue for the Promotion of Social Justice and Decent Work: Progress and Challenges towards Sustainable Development", XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour, 11–12 November 2013.

¹³ International Labour Organization. The Bali Declaration. 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting. Bali, Indonesia, 6–9 December 2016.

have embarked on positioning employment at the core of their national development plans¹⁴ and formulating a national employment policy as a concrete response to the complexity and multitude of employment deficits.

These agendas (international, regional and national) all invite an enhanced role for employment policies. Such a task flows from the ILO's mission. The ILO's experience and mandate on decent work are long-standing and multifaceted. In its preamble, the ILO Constitution cites the prevention of unemployment and the provision of an adequate living wage as key to attaining the objective of social justice. The 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia recognizes the solemn obligation of the ILO to assist member States in implementing measures aimed at achieving full employment. In 1964, at its 48th session, the International Labour Conference adopted the Employment Policy Convention (No. 122) and its supplementary recommendation.¹⁵

On the occasion of the adoption of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in 2008,¹⁶ followed by the Global Jobs Pact in 2009, the ILO invited Member States to ratify Convention No. 122, which is considered a priority convention for good governance. More recently, the Resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2010 and 2014 following the recurrent discussions on employment have provided further details on the integrated approach required to achieve the objective of decent work for all.¹⁷

On the basis of these Conventions and Resolutions, the International Labour Office is assisting a growing number of countries to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate employment policies. The support provided by the ILO is specifically designed to assist countries that so request to develop a national employment policy. The ILO supports countries throughout the process of producing an employment diagnostic analysis, then developing, implementing, evaluating and revising the NEP.

Achieving concrete employment outcomes implies solid and better employment policies as well as institutions to implement and monitor them. The experience of twenty years of employment policies makes it possible to reflect on whether or not progress has been made in this regard, as well as identify best practices and the challenges that will require attention in the future. In this context, and in accordance with the mandate of the Office, the ILO has carried out this study to review twenty years of experience of formulating and implementing employment policies. The study documents in detail how employment policies are formulated; the type and mix of measures that countries are adopting to promote more and better employment, and to what extent those policies are implemented. It forms part of the research area for the ILO in an effort to build further knowledge on employment policies. The results of this work will be used to bring relevant policy advice to ILO constituents.

Structure and organization of the report

The report is designed in a way that enables readers either to read it in its entirety or pick and choose the topics that they are most interested in. It is divided into three parts (NEP design, NEP content and NEP implementation) which are released as distinct parts and can be read independently. Each part concludes with a set of recommendations to highlight potential areas for improvement.

Part I 'NEP design' - After a short introduction, this paper begins with an overview of the employment context and policy challenges globally, by broad groupings of countries by income levels (low-income countries, middle-income and higher-income economies) and by geographical regions. Chapter 2 describes the ILO's approach to national employment policies. Chapter 3 provides an overview of employment policies worldwide: Where do employment policies exist? And has their importance changed over the past twenty years? Chapter 4 focuses on a central element of employment policies: the participative and consultative nature of the formulation process, the aim of which is to bring all actors concerned by employment around the same table to develop common responses to employment challenges. This section analyses the extent

¹⁴ "Social partners and their engagement in National Development Plans", International Labour Office (2011).

¹⁵ Also see https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/109/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_736873/lang-en/index.htm

¹⁶ See http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/WCMS_099766/lang-en/index.htm

¹⁷ See http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_142318.pdf and http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_246169.pdf

to which such processes have taken place in the countries concerned, and whether participation has changed over time in terms of its form and scope. Chapter 5 sets out the lessons learnt from twenty years of NEP formulation as well as recommendations for future actions on employment policies.

Part II 'NEP content' analyses employment policy content and evaluates the diverse approaches and areas covered by NEP documents. This section reviews the various elements that comprise employment policies – macroeconomic and sectoral policies, private sector development policies, skills development policies and labour market policies – in order to identify the different combinations of measures adopted, according to groupings of countries by income level and the periods considered. This chapter also focuses on certain cross-cutting issues, such as green jobs, youth employment, gender issues, and informal employment in order to determine how such issues are addressed in NEPs.

Part III 'NEP implementation' focuses on the implementation and monitoring of employment policies to identify the extent to which NEPs have had an impact and establish what challenges need to be overcome to ensure that the policies adopted are put into practice. It also compares the different chapters among themselves, for example by considering the extent to which an inclusive and quality process ensures that employment policies are adapted to national contexts, and lays the foundations for effective implementation. It recapitulates the lessons learned from twenty years' experience of employment policies, as well as outlining forthcoming challenges and opportunities. It also suggests next steps for action. The last part makes recommendations to directly improve the development process, the content, the implementation and the effectiveness of NEPs with a view to attaining their objectives.

Methodology

There are different types of national employment strategy, including standalone comprehensive national policy documents which focus entirely on employment, or the integration of employment objectives in national development plans or in other national policies (e.g. economic or sectoral policies). Other types of employment strategies can also focus on specific target groups (e.g. youth or women) or have a specific thematic (e.g. informality or rural employment) or geographic focus (e.g. sub-national). There is no "one size fits all" approach, nor is there a preferred or best option. The choice between having a separate policy document and mainstreaming employment into other policies depends on various elements, including countries' political economy and institutional context. This is also not exclusive, as different approaches can be combined at country level. However, this report focuses on countries which have a separate and explicit policy document. Hence, the term 'national employment policy' (NEP) in the context of this report refers to standalone employment policies only.

A national employment policy is:

- ... a policy approach for **achieving a country's employment goals**, covering both quantity and quality dimensions, addressing both the demand and supply side of the labour market, along with matching of the two,
- ...which brings together **government**, including not only ministries of labour and employment, but also finance, planning, and other government agencies, along with **representatives of workers and employers and other relevant stakeholders**, to formulate and implement policies with explicit employment objectives,
- ... which **comes in different forms depending on the country situation**, including standalone, comprehensive national policy documents and the integration of employment objectives in national/regional development plans, and in other national policies and strategies, backed up by implementation mechanisms.

Source: National employment policies for an inclusive, job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Sept. 20, ILO.

This study uses the ILO database on employment policies¹⁸ (ILO Employment Policy Gateway) set up by the International Labour Office. It provides information on the formulation processes, content and

¹⁸ The ILO Employment Policy Gateway is available at: www.ilo.org/empolgateway

implementation of standalone employment policies. This information covers both countries that have and those that have not adopted an NEP and includes details of the date of adoption as well as qualitative information on the design process, NEP objectives and content, NEP implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation systems. Information on 129 countries is updated constantly and covers the period 2000-2020, which is also the reference period for this study. The sample mostly includes countries where the ILO has provided assistance to the formulation and implementation of national employment policies, hence mainly low-income and middle-income countries.

Although Chapter 3, which gives an overview of NEPs worldwide, provides information for 129 countries, Chapters 4 and Part 3 are based on the 69 countries that have formally adopted an NEP,¹⁹ while Part 2 offers a comparative analysis of 40 countries. These countries were chosen to provide a balanced distribution of countries based on income level, geographical lines and date of adoption (so as to enable comparative analysis over time).

The study also makes use of official NEP documents, as well as studies carried out in certain countries, such as case studies, evaluations or assessments of employment policy implementation, diagnostic analyses, or other documents providing information on the formulation and implementation process.

¹⁹ It does not take into account countries that have initiated an NEP process, but only countries which have formally adopted one.



► Chapter 1

A complex employment landscape

In today's fast-changing globalized environment, employment issues are increasingly complex. Frequently, those seeking employment are unable to find work. However, unemployment is not always the main issue. In addition to quantity, the quality of jobs remains a pressing challenge worldwide. Despite being employed, one in five workers (equivalent to 630 million people) do not earn enough to lift themselves and their family out of poverty. Own-account workers and contributing family members account for around 42 per cent of the world workforce.²⁰ Among those in wage employment, casual forms of work are becoming more common, with involuntary temporary or part-time work and widespread informality, particularly in developing and emerging countries. Wages are also a concern. In many countries, despite rising productivity, real incomes are falling. Against this backdrop, the COVID-19 crisis has become, in a matter of months, the most severe economic and labour market downturn since the Great Depression.

Global labour market trends

Labour market challenges arise due to a range of factors and drivers, including the pattern of growth, globalization, demography as well as technology, which have a major influence on employment outcomes in all countries. The world is changing at such a pace and on such a scale that it has an impact on the world of work. This is accompanied by high levels of uncertainty which have been further increased by the COVID crisis. The situation of employment, despite a high degree of differentiation across countries, is not satisfactory for a large section of the workforce. Whether as a result of shortage of work opportunities, inadequate income from work or under-utilization of labour resources, or any combination of these main characteristics, large sections of the workforce live and work in conditions that require urgent improvement, as called for in the ILO Constitution of 1919.

The global population is growing, and also ageing

Between 2000 and 2020, the global population increased from 6.1 billion to 7.8 billion.²¹ This population is ageing. In all regions, the proportion of elderly (aged 65 and over) increased while the proportion between 15 and 24 years of age declined – and the regions with the highest proportions of older people also have the smallest shares of younger people.

The youngest populations are in sub-Saharan Africa, where there are more than six young people for each elderly person, and in the Arab States where there are more than five. Elsewhere the picture is very different. Eastern Asia, Europe and Northern America still have higher proportions of youth than elderly. But by 2050, or soon thereafter, in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and North America those under age 25 will be fewer than the number of persons aged 65.²²

As a consequence of population growth, the global labour force is increasingly concentrated in emerging and developing countries. Between 2000 and 2020, about half of the 737 million entrants to the labour force were in Southern Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. For some regions, such as MENA or sub-Saharan countries, the priority is to generate enough productive jobs. In higher-income regions, the task will include sustaining health and pension systems for the elderly population while relying on a smaller number of workers.

²⁰ ILO WESO 2020.

²¹ ILO calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

²² World Population Prospects 2019: Data Booklet.

The demographic trends observed between 2000 and 2020 are expected to continue to 2030. The global population is projected to reach 8.6 billion, with an ageing population in most of the world, but with a growing youth and working-age population in some regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Ageing is, in fact, a major issue across all regions – except, as yet, sub-Saharan Africa.

As a result, many parts of the world will see an increase in the old-age economic dependency ratio – the number of workers aged 65 and over as a proportion of the total labour force. This will be particularly significant in the regions of Europe, Northern America and Eastern Asia. For instance, in Northern, Southern and Western Europe where, between 2017 and 2030, the proportion of people aged 65 and over will increase from 42 to 55 per cent as a proportion of the total labour force.²³

Labour force participation rates are falling, and participation is especially low for young people and for women

At the same time, labour force participation is declining. Between 2000 and 2019, participation rates declined from 64.7 to 60.7 per cent.²⁴ Participation is lowest in the Arab States, Northern Africa, and particularly in Southern Asia. In contrast, it is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The decline in participation has been greatest in the upper-middle income countries and smallest in the low-income countries. This is partly because people are spending longer in education and thus entering the labour force later.²⁵ However, others are discouraged by a lack of opportunities.

There are significant gender differences – with lower labour force participation rates for women. Women's participation tends to be highest in poor countries where many women have to work to meet basic needs. But as incomes rise and there is less need to complement family incomes, participation tends to fall. But then in higher-income countries with better work opportunities, women are encouraged to enter the labour force.²⁶ Women's participation may also vary by age. Women of prime working age often leave the labour force to give birth and raise children. Whether and when they return will depend partly on the availability of maternity benefits and childcare services. However, women's employment also responds to social norms and expectations. As a result, participation is lowest in the Arab States, Northern Africa and Southern Asia. Gender gaps and low levels of female participation impact women's welfare and freedom and reduce the potential for socio-economic development and economic growth.²⁷

This trend of declining labour force participation has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Accounting for 71 per cent of global employment losses, inactivity increased by 81 million as a result of the pandemic, which resulted in a reduction of the global labour force participation rate by 2.2 percentage points in 2020 to 58.7 per cent.²⁸

In many countries, structural transformation has been slow, hampering prospects for improving employment and reducing poverty

Historically, countries that have been able to shift their economy's sectoral composition from low productivity, subsistence or casual agriculture to higher productivity industry and services successfully accelerated socio-economic development. But in many economies structural change is sluggish.²⁹ In lower-income regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, and some countries in South-Eastern Asia, the largest source of employment is still agriculture, which in some countries accounts for almost eight workers

²³ ILO. 2018. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018*.

²⁴ ILO. 2020. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020*.

²⁵ For a discussion on trends in the labour force participation for youth see ILO. 2017. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future* (Geneva).

²⁶ See for example Goldin, C. 1994. *The U-shaped female labour force functions in economic development and economic history*, NBER Working Paper No. 4704 (Cambridge, National Bureau of Economic Research) and Dasgupta, S.; Verick, S. (eds.) 2016. *Transformation of women at work in Asia: An unfinished development agenda* (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

²⁷ Dasgupta and Verick, *ibid*; ILO. 2018. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for women 2018* (Geneva).

²⁸ ILO Monitor, "COVID and the World of Work", 7th edition, January 2021.

²⁹ ILO. 2019. "Structural transformation for inclusive growth and productive employment". Technical brief No. 1.

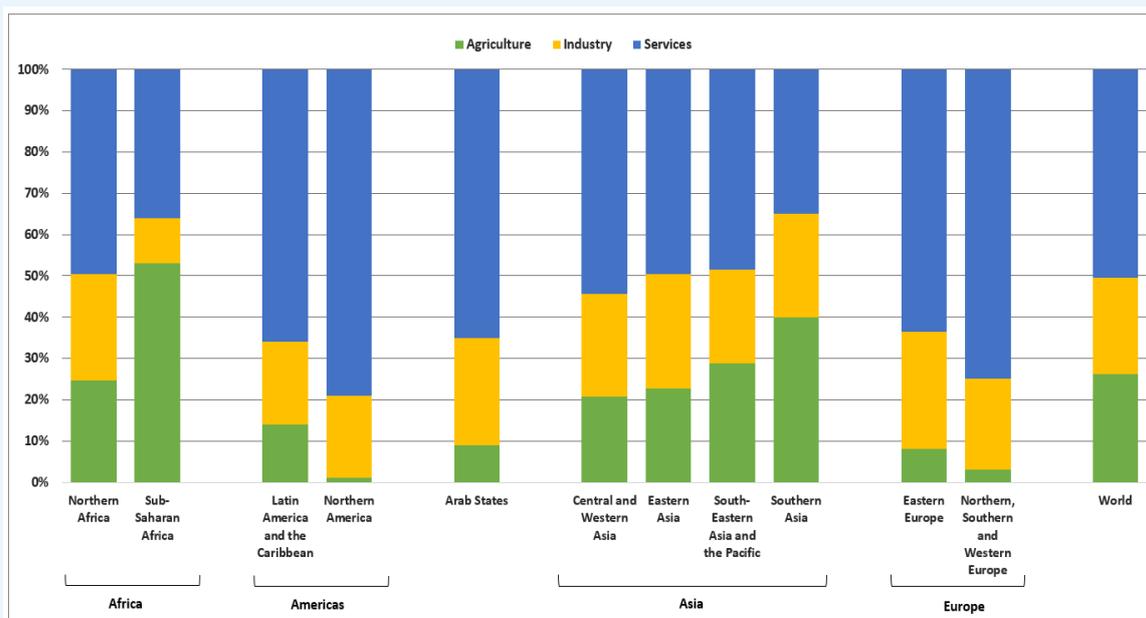
in ten. In many low-income countries, the contribution of agriculture to GDP has declined faster than the share of workers in agriculture, meaning productivity has fallen. At the same time, manufacturing has not absorbed a great many workers in most countries.

Over the past twenty years, in upper-middle income and lower-middle income countries a significant number of workers have moved into services and, to a lesser extent, into industry. Much of the developing world has seen only a small expansion of manufacturing. In sub-Saharan Africa, manufacturing still only employs roughly one worker in ten.

Higher-income regions such as Northern America and Europe have seen a shift away from manufacturing (Figure 1-1). Indeed, most workers in high-income and upper-middle income countries are employed in services, which is also the biggest employer in lower-middle income countries. The service sector is still smaller, but growing, in low-income countries.

Structural change does not necessarily lead to more and better employment. In much of the developing and emerging countries, employment has been moving from low-productivity agriculture to low-productivity services, with similar employment quality concerns and where unemployment lingers.

► Figure 1-1: Employment by sector, 2020, per cent



Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2020.

Many countries continue to report high rates of labour underutilization, with large shares of unemployed and NEETs and high incidence of underemployment

There are not enough jobs, especially for youth

Between 2000 and 2019 (prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis) unemployment fell in all regions, and global unemployment fell from 5.8 per cent to 5.4 per cent – 190 million people. The improvement was greatest in Europe, from 10.4 to 7.3 per cent, and in Northern Africa from 15.1 to 11.9 per cent – though this still left the latter region with the world’s highest rate.³⁰ The global unemployment rate stood at 5.4 per cent in 2019, a fairly low level which, however, masks significant disparities across countries and demographic

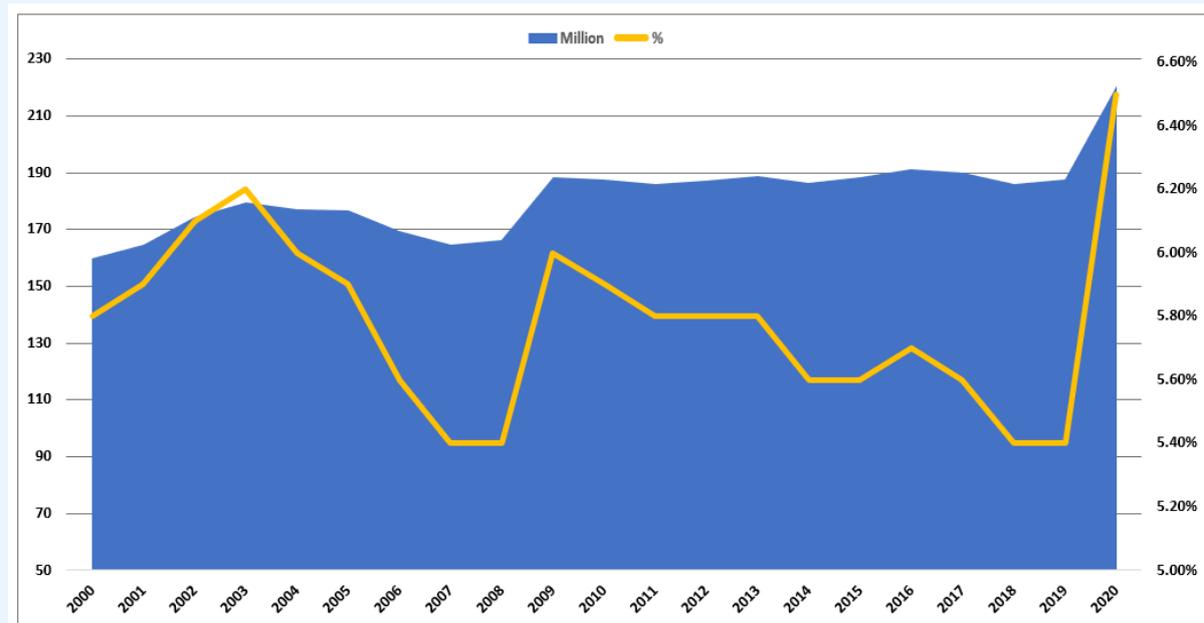
³⁰ ILO. 2020. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020*.

groups. Indeed, a number of countries are still suffering from the unemployment backlog of the 2009 financial crisis, especially young people.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the unemployment rate increased to 6.5 per cent in 2020, though a much greater proportion of job losses has shifted to inactivity (and hence, the decrease in the labour force participation rate noted above).³¹ The overall unemployment rates mask important differences between groups. One of the most notable contrasts concerns age. Globally, the rate of unemployment for young people ages 15-24 is more than three times that of adults aged 25 and over. For young people, unemployment will not only affect their income but can also erode their professional and social skills and deny them valuable work experience, with potential lifelong impacts on career progress and wages. Women are also at a disadvantage. In the Arab States and Northern Africa, the unemployment rate for women is between two and three times that of men.

Another significant concern is the duration of unemployment. Persons who are unemployed for 12 months or longer not only suffer substantial financial hardship but may also become less employable. All these forms of labour underutilization in the early stages of a young person's career can lead to a number of scarring effects, including lower employment and earnings prospects decades later.³²

► **Figure 1-2: Global unemployment and unemployment rate, 2000-2020**



Source: ILO modelled estimates, March 2020.

Avoiding unemployment is not enough – the scale of labour underutilization is far larger than that of unemployment

Beyond unemployment, some employed persons could desire and be available to work more hours ('time-related underemployment'), and some persons outside the labour force may be available for, or seeking, employment (the potential labour force). Even before the COVID-19 shock, an estimated 165 million people in the world experienced time-related underemployment in 2019, while an additional 119 million people were in the potential labour force. Combined with the traditional measure of unemployment, the full extent of labour underutilization amounted to 473 million, or 14 per cent of the extended labour force. This was

³¹ ILO Monitor, "COVID and the World of Work", 7th edition, January 2021.

³² GET youth 2020, ILO.

more than twice the worldwide number of unemployed.³³ This is expected to rise substantially in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. According to ILO estimates, working hour losses in 2020 reached 8.8 per cent³⁴ and are reflected in higher levels of unemployment and inactivity, with inactivity increasing to a greater extent than unemployment.

Young people being left behind, neither in employment, nor in education or training

While some young people are staying longer at school or university, many are neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET). It is estimated that more than one fifth of the world's youth are NEETs in 2020.³⁵ These young people should be contributing to national development but are being underutilized. They also have fewer chances to increase their qualifications, which threatens their career prospects and earnings.

The proportion of NEET is highest in lower-middle income countries, and lowest in high-income countries. The reasons for being NEET vary widely across countries and regions; the proportion will depend on such factors as levels of employment, early school leaving and availability of opportunities. Around three-quarters of NEETs are young women – who are constrained by social norms which shape unequal labour market outcomes for men and women. Typically, inactivity is a graver concern than unemployment – especially for young women.³⁶

Access to paid work is not a guarantee of decent employment. Many people are own-account and contributing family workers

These workers have irregular incomes, limited access to legal rights and social security and are likely to be working informally. Globally, 1.4 billion workers, or 45 per cent, were own-account and contributing family workers in 2020.³⁷

The problem is greatest in low-income countries where 80 per cent of workers are in vulnerable employment; the proportion is lower in lower-middle income countries at 61 per cent, in upper-middle income countries at 38 per cent, and lowest in high-income countries at 9 per cent. By global region the proportions are 74 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, 69 per cent in Southern Asia, and 45 per cent in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific.³⁸ Although there have been marked improvements over the past 15 years, these were from very high starting points and since 2013 the rate of improvement has slowed. Again, there are clear gender dimensions: in most regions, women are more likely than men to be in vulnerable jobs, particularly doing unpaid family work.

Informal employment is still prevalent

Given the limited employment opportunities in the formal sector and the absence of unemployment benefits, in many countries people are trapped in informal employment – with poor working conditions, limited access to legal and social protection, and little or no income security.

In 2016, around the world 60 per cent of workers were in informal employment – more than two billion people.³⁹ The proportion is highest in Africa, at 86 per cent, followed by 69 per cent in the Arab States, 68 per cent in Asia and the Pacific 40 per cent in the Americas, and 25 per cent in Europe and Central Asia.

³³ ILO, Ibid.

³⁴ ILO Monitor, COVID and the World of Work, 7th edition, January 2021.

³⁵ For more information on NEETs, see ILO. 2020. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*, op. cit. and ILO. 2019. "Young people not in employment, education or training". Technical brief NO 3.

³⁶ ILO, Ibid.

³⁷ ILOstat. ILO estimates November 2019. Accessed November 2020.

³⁸ In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, the share of workers in vulnerable jobs dropped from 78.1 per cent to 45 per cent. In Eastern Asia, it declined from 52.3 per cent of workers to 42 per cent. In Central and Western Asia, vulnerable work accounts for 29 per cent of workers in 2020, relative to 43.7 per cent in 2002.

³⁹ Data on informal employment from ILO. 2018. "Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture", (Geneva), unless otherwise specified.

Informal employment is typically high in low- and lower-middle income countries with a high proportion of the workforce working in subsistence farming or very small family farms. But informal employment is also widespread in urban areas. This is mostly in small businesses, but even formal enterprises may also include workers who are informally employed. Again, there are clear gender differences; in most of sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and Latin America, women are more likely than men to be informally employed. This is also a major problem for young people, of whom three-quarters are informally employed. This is partly because they are more likely to be domestic and contributing family workers but also because they lack opportunities.⁴⁰ Older workers are less likely to be in informal employment.

Workers in the informal economy have been particularly hit by the COVID-19 crisis. For them, stopping work or working remotely from home is not an option. Staying home means losing their jobs and, for many, it has also meant losing their livelihoods. It is estimated that almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a 60 per cent decline in their earnings.⁴¹

Across the world there has been an expansion of non-standard forms of employment

Many countries have seen a proliferation of non-standard forms of employment – notably temporary and part-time work.⁴² International comparisons are hampered by differences in national statistical definitions, but some trends are evident. In emerging and developing countries, casual work has long been common in agriculture and construction but has now extended to other sectors such as manufacturing and the public sector.⁴³ In developed countries, non-standard employment permeates all sectors, with many low-wage occupations. The groups most vulnerable to such work are women, youth and migrants.

Some people prefer casual work, which is typically more flexible. These forms of work, if voluntary, offer flexibility, and opportunities for work experience and entry into the labour market – and can be a stepping stone to standard employment. However, non-standard employment is frequently involuntary – trapping people in unsafe and unhealthy jobs with poor working conditions and a limited voice or opportunities for upgrading their skills – and thus limiting the prospects of improving productivity. Duality is a significant characteristic of developing and emerging countries' labour markets – divided along formal/informal as well as standard/non-standard lines. This adds to wage and income inequality, constraining productivity and reducing economic growth.

Wages are often low, and represent a declining share of GDP

In the first few years after the global financial crisis of 2008-09, driven by developing and emerging countries, global wage growth increased. But since 2012 growth has decelerated.⁴⁴ Growth was most robust in Asia and the Pacific at 3.5 per cent, in the Arab States at 3.4 per cent and Eastern Europe at 5.0 per cent, but more modest in Africa at 1.3 per cent, in Latin America and the Caribbean, at 0.7 per cent, and in Central and Western Asia, at 0.5 per cent. Real wage growth picked up in Northern America, at 0.7 per cent. But in Northern, Western and Southern Europe, real wages stagnated.⁴⁵ Moreover, in many countries wage growth lags behind productivity growth, so that wages are getting a declining share of GDP. At the same time, many countries have seen rises in inequality which are undermining social cohesion. Some of this is due to the characteristics of individual workers and their productivity – but such differences fail to explain a substantial part of the wage gaps.

⁴⁰ ILO. 2020. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Paths to a better working future*, op. cit.

⁴¹ International Labour Organization. ILO Monitor: "COVID-19 and the world of work". Sixth edition. Sep 2020.

⁴² These include temporary employment, part-time work, multi-party employment relationships (including temporary agency work), disguised employment relationships and dependent self-employment. Analysis of non-standard employment from ILO, 2016, *Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects* (Geneva).

⁴³ ILO. 2020. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020*.

⁴⁴ Global wage trends based on ILO. 2020. *Global Wage Report 2020/21: Wages and minimum wages in the time of COVID-19* (Geneva).

⁴⁵ ILO, Ibid.

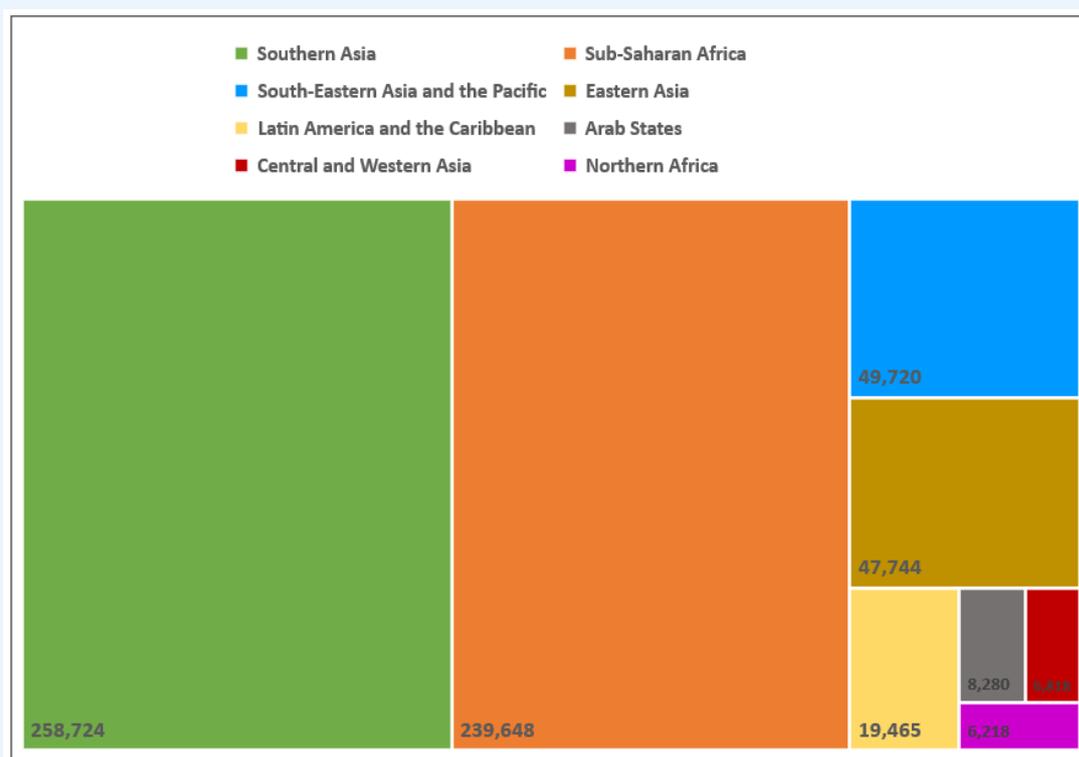
Low wages contribute to working poverty especially for young people

Many of those in vulnerable and informal employment are still living in ‘working poverty’ – unable to lift themselves and their families above the poverty line of \$3.20 per day. The extent of working poverty has declined between 2000 and 2019, where the incidence fell from 47 to 19 per cent of the global workforce – 234 million people in 2019.

The improvements were greatest in Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific. Nevertheless, in 2019, over 630 million workers were living in working poverty – around 61 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and around 40 per cent in Southern Asia – a consequence of slow structural transformation that leaves many people still surviving on subsistence agriculture.⁴⁶ Worst affected are young workers, over one third of whom are poor.

The projected decline to 17 per cent in 2024 may not be achieved as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis, which is driving wages down, in particular for women and low-paid workers.⁴⁷ Globally, labour income (before taking into account income support measures) in 2020 is estimated to have declined by 8.3 per cent, which amounts to US\$3.7 trillion, or 4.4 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP). The largest labour income loss was experienced by workers in the Americas (10.3 per cent), while the smallest loss was registered in Asia and the Pacific (6.6 per cent).⁴⁸

► **Figure 1-3: Working poverty distribution by region (thousands), 2020**



Note: The working poverty rate is the share of the employed population with per capita income or consumption less than \$3.20 per day

Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2020.

⁴⁶ Working poverty also accounts for large shares of workers in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific (19.6 per cent), Arab States (20.4 per cent) and Northern Africa (24.6 per cent) in 2018.

⁴⁷ Global Wage Report 2020-2021, ILO.

⁴⁸ ILO. 2021. ILO Monitor, “COVID and the World of Work”, 7th edition (Geneva).

All of these labour market problems are compounded for women.

The COVID-19 crisis has affected women disproportionately. Women's jobs are relatively more at risk, and women are losing them at a greater speed than men. For women who remain in employment, their greater care obligations are forcing them to cut down on paid working hours or to extend total working hours (paid and unpaid) to unsustainable levels.⁴⁹

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, large numbers of women continued to be excluded from the labour market. Compared with men, women are less likely to participate in the labour market, and those who do are more likely to be unemployed or remain predominantly in low-productivity sectors, poorly paid positions or informal settings, leading to lower earnings and working conditions. Many carry the dual burden of having to combine employment with household work, or with unpaid care work – three-quarters of which is carried out by women. Such work is typically unacknowledged and undervalued.⁵⁰

Women's care responsibilities often determine whether they can enter paid employment and affect the kind of jobs they can get. As a result, women are less likely to get wage and salaried work and are more frequently in vulnerable employment, particularly unpaid family work. There are also persistent gender pay gaps – only some of which can be explained by personal characteristics, such as education, and patterns of occupational and sectoral segregation. More broadly, these inequalities result from a combination of factors – including the structure of the economy, policies, household and individual characteristics, and social norms – and thus require concerted action.⁵¹

Policy challenges

Employment problems are complex and multidimensional, resulting from factors such as the nature of growth, demographic trends, the structural transformation of economies, access to and quality of education and training, the effects of a fast-changing world and many more.

Employment growth has lagged behind economic growth around the world, but policy challenges vary from region to region and country to country.

In some regions, such as Northern, Southern and Western Europe, a critical challenge lies in creating quality jobs and addressing unemployment and non-standard employment. In other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, high rates of labour market participation and employment-to-population ratios indicate that the main task is to increase the quality and productivity of jobs as well as measures to promote opportunities in higher-value-added sectors. In the Arab States, Northern Africa as well as Southern Asia, low levels of participation and employment-to-population ratios necessitate both improving creation of, and access to, productive jobs and increasing labour force participation. In these and other areas, it is crucial to address wide gender gaps by boosting women's participation and employment. Some forms of growth create employment and reduce poverty more effectively than others. Understanding this is a major challenge for all countries.

Structural transformation and diversification matters to the demand for productive employment

For most developing countries, increasing the capacity of the economy to absorb labour and promote socio-economic development will require structural transformation. When agriculture sees no increases in productivity, when the share of manufacturing fails to expand, or when low-productivity services absorb all rural-urban migration, then economic transformation faces strong headwinds and stagnation sets in. Policy challenges, therefore, include achieving an increase in agricultural productivity, fostering the non-farm informal sector while supporting the growth of labour-intensive industries as well as promoting diversification within and across sectors. In high-income countries, the main shift has been from industry to

⁴⁹ ILO. 2020. "A gender-responsive employment recovery: Building back fairer" (Geneva).

⁵⁰ ILO. 2018. "Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work" (Geneva).

⁵¹ Dasgupta and Verick, op. cit.

services. Here, one of the critical challenges relates to managing and regulating the spread of non-standard forms of work.

As highlighted by recent ILO research, structural change is not in itself a guarantee of better quality employment; it also requires strengthened social dialogue, a strong education and training system that can keep pace with the changing skills requirements, solid market institutions and better social policies and institutional capabilities.⁵²

Boost education and training

Governments wishing to facilitate growth and encourage beneficial structural shifts will need to strengthen human capital and employability and harness the full potential of human resources. For this purpose, one of the prerequisites is universal access to quality education. Great strides have been made in widening access to education, but quality often remains low – which hampers human development and constrains productivity. This is evident from assessments such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.⁵³

To address these issues, governments will need to revisit and adapt education and training curricula and systems, including technical and vocational systems, and opportunities for on-the-job training. The aim should be to align education and skills training to labour market demands – through partnerships between government, social partners and other stakeholders such as educational institutions. In particular, education and training systems must respond to new technologies and innovations that are changing how traditional jobs are done while also creating new jobs.⁵⁴ Governments will need to offer incentives for employers to provide the necessary training and encourage individuals to take up these opportunities, especially NEETs and disadvantaged groups, including women and rural populations. Governments will also need active labour markets to match the demand and supply of labour, reduce information asymmetries and labour market frictions and facilitate access to decent work.

Build social and legal protection

Today, four billion people – more than half the world's population – are not covered by at least one social protection benefit, while comprehensive social security systems cover only 29 per cent of the global population.⁵⁵ The problems are greatest in emerging and developing countries where government spending on social protection is low and informality is widespread. Workers who lack basic protection will hesitate to take risks in seizing new work opportunities.⁵⁶ At the other end of the scale, desperation can cause migrants and refugees to take extreme risks to access better opportunities.

Strengthening social and legal protection is thus crucial for achieving full and equal access to decent work and inclusive development. It is also important in removing the barriers of discrimination and chronic deprivation which trap people in low-pay, low-productivity jobs or informal settings.⁵⁷

Promote wage setting and collective bargaining

Low wages inhibit consumption and reduce aggregate demand. And if they clearly lag behind productivity, workers will feel they are not partaking of the fruits of progress – which can threaten social cohesion. Policymakers can encourage inclusive development through wage policies, such as minimum wage, wage-setting and collective bargaining policies.

⁵² ILO, *ibid.*

⁵³ Campbell, Egger and Ronnas, *op.cit.*

⁵⁴ ILO. 2018. "Skills policies and systems for a future workforce", Issue brief prepared for the 2nd Meeting of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, 15-17 Feb (Geneva).

⁵⁵ Data on informal employment from ILO. 2017. "World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals", (Geneva).

⁵⁶ Campbell, Egger and Ronnas, *op.cit.*

⁵⁷ ILO. 2003. "Working out of Poverty", Report of the Director General to the 91th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva).

Intensify social dialogue

Creating decent working conditions, and inclusive development requires strong social dialogue.⁵⁸ This can take the form of bipartite or tripartite negotiations, consultation or exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers on economic and social policy.

Social dialogue is critical for building consensus, preventing and resolving labour disputes, determining wages, improving working conditions and promoting sustainable enterprises. It is particularly important in a world facing widening inequality, new forms of work and weaker labour market institutions. Moreover, in developing and emerging countries, legal and practical barriers make it difficult for workers' organizations to reach people in informal employment.

- ▶ Europe and Central Asia – National approaches in the 2008 global financial post-crisis period saw a shift away from social dialogue and towards unilateral austerity measures.
- ▶ Latin America and the Caribbean – Despite progress, social dialogue mechanisms are not always well institutionalized, and acts of violence against workers' and employers' organizations have weakened industrial relations systems.
- ▶ Africa – Since 2013, many countries have established or strengthened social dialogue mechanisms but still have limited resources and capacity.
- ▶ Asia and the Pacific – This region lags behind others in the ratification of social dialogue and governance conventions.⁵⁹

Social dialogue must adapt to new realities including the need to support the most vulnerable, such as workers in informal and non-standard employment such as internet-based work, as well as those operating across borders. Identifying problems and solutions requires close collaboration between governments, workers and employers. For this purpose, it is important to build capacity in national labour administrations and workers' and employers' organizations, and create the basic legal frameworks.

For some countries, policies need to foster productive employment and facilitate school-to-work transition. In other countries, where the labour force is likely to contract, e.g. Eastern Asia and Europe, the aim should be to maintain levels of output by increasing labour force participation and facilitating youth transition into the labour market, as well as migration.⁶⁰ Companies can also invest in new technologies that increase productivity and make up for smaller labour forces. At the same time, governments will need to manage the higher costs of pensions, health and other social services.

Ensure gender equality

Women's labour force participation and access to decent jobs is crucial for promoting women's empowerment, increasing productivity as well as ensuring that socio-economic development is inclusive. Gender inequalities result from a combination of factors – including the structure of the economy, policies, and social norms – and thus require concerted action.⁶¹ A key aspect is the persistent gender inequalities in households and the labour market, which are inextricably linked with care work. In this context, urgent action is needed to pursue the high road to care work if there is to be a future of work for both women and men that is decent.⁶² More globally, gender equality must be put at the core of macroeconomic, sectoral and labour market policies. In the more specific context of the COVID crisis, four policy priorities are needed for a gender-responsive recovery: prevent women from losing their jobs; avoid premature fiscal consolidation; invest in care; and focus on gender-responsive employment policies.⁶³

⁵⁸ Social dialogue trends from ILO. 2018. "Social dialogue and tripartism", International Labour Conference 107th Session, Report VI.

⁵⁹ Social dialogue trends from ILO. 2018. "Social dialogue and tripartism". ILC 107th session, report VI.

⁶⁰ ILO. 2020. "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs", op. cit.

⁶¹ Dasgupta and Verick, op. cit.

⁶² ILO. 2018. "Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work". Geneva.

⁶³ ILO. 2020. "A gender-responsive recovery: Building back fairer", Geneva.

Guarantee the rights of migrant workers

More than 164 million people are migrant workers.⁶⁴ Most are in high-income countries, especially North America, Northern, Southern, and Western Europe and the Arab States; there are fewer migrant workers in middle-income and low-income countries. Of the 164 million migrant workers worldwide, around 68 per cent are employed in high-income countries and about 30 per cent elsewhere. For the receiving countries, migrants can help offset the decline in working age populations. For the sending countries, migration can reduce the pressure for job creation and there are gains from remittances and from new skills when migrants return. But the exit of people of prime working age may hinder prospects for economic growth. Governments need, therefore, to ensure basic rights and safe working conditions for migrant workers while promoting links between migration and development in both sending and receiving countries.⁶⁵

Make globalization more inclusive

Over the past quarter century, globalization has sparked radical shifts in the world of work. Supply chains are increasingly taking on a global dimension and have become the norm in a number of industries, such as textiles, automobiles and electronics. Production processes have become geographically fragmented and dispersed globally, leading to outsourcing a growing range of tasks and work, both within and between countries. These changes – together with liberalization of financial services, trade and investment – impact employment and earning patterns present a number of opportunities (such as new markets and job opportunities) as well as challenges.⁶⁶ Indeed, global competitive processes are placing downwards pressures on working conditions and respect for fundamental rights. With intensified market competition, firms facing demand uncertainty are using a mix of permanent and temporary workers to evade the labour adjustment costs associated with permanent workers, thereby exacerbating inequalities and insecurity. This highlights the need for a strong social dimension of globalization as well as solid employment policies to ensure that it delivers what working people everywhere aspire to – a decent job, security and a voice in the decision-making process.

Adapt to technological change

Rapid technological change is fundamentally transforming the world of work. New technologies are changing traditional tasks and jobs and transforming or creating new occupations. They are also changing the types of work people do, often in the direction of non-standard employment. Impacts will vary according to a country's level of development, the structure of the economy and on how well prepared the labour force is to adapt to changing market demands.⁶⁷ Historically, some technologies have displaced labour, but others have augmented and benefited the workforce. It is too soon to tell whether the current technological revolution will have similar effects, but ultimately most workers will need to adapt to a more automated and digitized world. In particular, digital labour platforms, by connecting businesses and clients to workers, are transforming labour processes, with major implications for the future of work. While businesses can benefit from platforms and they have the potential to provide workers with income-generating opportunities, challenges abound. For workers, these relate in particular to regularity of work and income, working conditions, social protection, skills utilization, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.⁶⁸ Positive effects of technology are hence not automatic, but will require proactive policies and institutions.

Encourage greener economies

Environmental crises threaten economic and social progress. The world of work is also subject to environmental pressures. The impacts will, however, be uneven across countries, sectors and groups of workers. Climate change and the demand for 'green transitions' will directly affect those working in

⁶⁴ ILO. 2018. "ILO Global estimates on international migrant workers – Results and methodology", (Geneva, ILO).

⁶⁵ ILO. 2016. "Decent work for migrant workers", (Geneva, ILO).

⁶⁶ World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, 2004. *A Fair Globalization : creating opportunities for all*.

⁶⁷ Bárcia de Mattos, F.; Dasgupta, S.; Jiang, X.; Kucera, D. (forthcoming). *Robotics and reshoring: Employment implications for developing countries* (Geneva).

⁶⁸ ILO. 2021. "World Employment and Social Outlook" (Geneva).

agriculture, fisheries, tourism and different types of industry. Unless addressed with strong determination, the climate crisis could reverse the social and economic development progress achieved over many decades, destroying livelihoods, increasing inequalities and threatening the achievement of the SDGs.

The transition to greener economies presents both problems and opportunities for economic growth, decent job creation, social inclusion and poverty reduction.⁶⁹ Green jobs – defined as decent jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment – are amongst those that contribute the most to development.

Promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy

Informality is related to the level of economic and social development. There is a clear positive correlation between poverty and informality, with the poor facing higher rates of informal employment. In many developing countries, much of the labour force is employed informally, often as self-employed but also as casual workers, homeworkers, or domestic workers.⁷⁰

Policies for addressing drivers of informality include pro-employment macroeconomic policies that support aggregate demand, productive investment and structural transformation for formal job creation, as well as strengthening social security systems. Tailoring policy support for vulnerable and hard-hit groups in the informal economy in the post COVID-19 crisis scenario will be crucial, including women and young people.

Creating effective, quality and accountable institutions

Transformative changes in the world of work are influenced and shaped by institutions and organizations. In other words, employment policies are only as good as the institutions that deliver them. This means that the development of quality and inclusive institutions is essential to ensure job-rich growth, equitable access to employment as well as more resilient labour markets. Strengthening governance mechanisms and accountable institutions is a key element for the effective delivery and monitoring of employment policies and ensuring citizens can hold their governments to account in meeting their employment goals.

Economies are embedded in societies. This means that transformative changes in the economy and in the world of work are influenced and shaped by the institutions, structures and organizations that make up society (Polanyi, 1944). At the heart of any society are shared knowledge and belief systems that have been accumulated over a long process of societal learning (Nübler, 2014). On the one hand, “useful knowledge” (i.e. knowledge of facts and means-end relationships, and know-how), which may be provided by indigenous and scientific bodies of knowledge, shapes the innovation capabilities of a society. The specific mix of vocational, technical and professional competencies determines those technologies and products that a country may feasibly develop. The more diverse and complex the knowledge base of a society, the greater the opportunities to develop new products by recombining knowledge and skill sets that exist in the labour force.

On the other hand, each society develops shared belief systems such as culture, ideologies, religions and philosophies. Such belief systems can have a powerful influence on mindsets, attitudes and expectations, and on openness to change within a society. Belief systems can influence three distinct channels through which societies shape productive transformation and the creation of jobs (figure 2.2). They can enhance innovation capabilities by mobilizing the necessary creativity, entrepreneurial spirit (Schumpeter, 1911) or craftsmanship (Sennett, 2008), thereby strengthening investment, innovation and research and development (R&D) (North, 1990). Moreover, changes in socially structured beliefs are key to transforming consumer behaviour, preferences and demand. A prime example is the promotion of new values in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s, when, according to some commentators, the promise of unlimited happiness through consumption was held out to society (Strasser, McGovern and Judt, 1998). This notion was supported by new institutions, in particular consumer credit and advertising agencies. Lastly, shared belief systems and institutions also support social cohesion by creating trust, promoting a sense of fairness and justice in society, and being inclusive. Indeed, the existence of inclusive institutions that serve all layers

⁶⁹ ILO. 2018. “World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs”, (Geneva).

⁷⁰ ILO. 2018. “Women and men in the informal economy. A statistical picture”.

of society tends to be accompanied by quicker technological change and dynamic innovation behaviour, higher investment and productive transformation (Nübler, 2008; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

Dynamic interlinkages for sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth and development A sustained process of structural transformation and growth can only be driven by a continuous transformation and enrichment of society's knowledge base and belief systems. In other words, the engine that sustains growth is societal learning. The SDGs themselves reflect the fact that such learning takes place in different ways. Promoting full and productive employment (target 8.5) and enterprise development (target 8.3) is part of a societal learning strategy that seeks to help apprentices and workers acquire experience, technical skills and occupational competencies (SDG 4). Simultaneously, entrepreneurs are able to become more adept at managing change, recombining resources and creating value and jobs. New learning opportunities are typically generated by technological change as businesses develop innovative products, which lead to new jobs and more complex occupations (Vivarelli, 2014; Nübler, 2018).

Furthermore, progress on decent work and the protection of workers' rights (targets 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7) is critical in creating a culture of learning and craftsmanship within businesses and in the world of work in general. Workers derive personal fulfilment from developing "the skills to do things well" (Sennett, 2008). This is supported by social protection (target 1.3), which enhances the motivation of workers to collaborate in training, mobilizes creativity and makes societies open to change and willing to learn (Piore, 1995).

Learning also takes place in social networks such as families and communities, and in the school system. Progress on SDG 4 targets (e.g. equal access to the different levels of education) enriches the mix of knowledge, and helps change socially mediated mindsets, attitudes and expectations. Rapid technological change highlights the need for countries to reform and modernize their technical and vocational education and training systems. Moreover, the development of quality institutions (SDG 16) helps with the management of sustained learning dynamics. Such "meta" institutions are critical for mobilizing resources that make it possible to implement a dynamic learning strategy, thereby sustaining social and structural transformation (Nübler, 2014).

Lastly, progress towards SDG 5 is essential for societal learning and the enhancement of innovation capabilities. The empowerment of women and girls, along with equal employment opportunities for women and men, contributes to a more diverse knowledge base, thereby leading to greater innovation, more resilient societies and stronger economic growth. The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund recently argued that women and men, "even with the same levels of education bring different sets of skills to the table which are complementary, and thus result in higher performance" (Lagarde, 2019). Consequently, societal learning requires simultaneous progress on target 5.5 (equal opportunities in economic, political and public life), targets 5.a, 5.b and 5.c (empowerment), and target 4.5 (equal access to all levels of education and training), in addition to progress on SDG 8 targets.

The magnitude of employment challenges worldwide, exacerbated by the COVID crisis, calls for a renewed emphasis on employment policies

The trends reported above show that employment challenges are multifaceted and inherently interconnected. The challenge lies in addressing them through appropriate policies. With the concerns that the trends may even accelerate and become more complex in the future, including in the wake of the COVID crisis which is exacerbating existing inequalities in the labour markets,⁷¹ the ILO calls for an ambitious approach to employment policy, placing employment at the heart of public policies and leveraging policy interventions in a wide range of areas to generate quality employment for all. In that regard, the ILO has developed important instruments and policies which are the subject of the next chapter.

⁷¹ See ILO. 2021. ILO Monitor, "COVID and the World of Work", 7th edition (Geneva). Chapter 2.



► Chapter 2

The ILO approach to employment policies

Employment in any economy is the outcome of the interplay of many factors, including efforts by the State to channel market forces to alter the demand for, and supply of, labour. Over the years, the ILO has emphasized that employment should not be seen as a residual outcome of economic growth, but also a consequence of coherent integrated public policies. As the International Labour Organization embarks on its second century, employment policies remain at the core of its mandate to promote decent work.

As growth has become less efficient in generating productive employment, a commitment to decent employment implies not treating jobs as a residual outcome of growth, but developing and implementing policies that make employment creation an explicit goal. Reversing current employment trends will require explicit, proactive and strong employment policy responses. In other words, this means reviving the role that States can, and must, play in planning and coordinating policies, ensuring that they are coherent and increase the propensity of growth to create more and better jobs.

*'Employment policy lies at the nexus between the demand for and the supply of labour, and the extent to which a healthy equilibrium between the two can satisfy the objective of full, freely chosen and productive employment. In the absence of policies, such an equilibrium is difficult to achieve because of market failures, principally those of information asymmetries and power imbalances inherent in the employment relationship'...*⁷²

This raises key questions: Who are the players and what are the institutions, the practices and structures, the social and political relations that must change and be leveraged? How can they be changed through public policy, and more specifically with what kind of employment policy?

The ILO policy and normative framework for employment policy provides some key principles in that regard. The ILO approach to employment policy has evolved through a series of landmark global agreements, starting with the Organization's founding documents.

- **1919 – The ILO Constitution** – This provides for the 'prevention of unemployment and the provision of an adequate living wage'.
- **1944 – The ILO Declaration of Philadelphia** – Part III recognizes, inter alia, "the solemn obligation of the International Labour Organization to further among the nations of the world: (a) full employment and the raising of standards of living", and notably "(b) the employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common wellbeing".
- **1964 – The Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)** – This provides general principles for Member States working on an employment policy.
- **2003 – The Global Employment Agenda (2003)** – The Agenda aims at increasing productive employment, but this should also be decent employment in which international labour standards, social protection and workers' fundamental rights go hand in hand with job creation.⁷³
- **2008 – The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization** – This declaration reaffirmed the commitment "to place full and productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies". It underscores the importance of decent work and promotes an integrated approach to achieving decent work objectives, because these objectives are "inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive".

⁷² The case for a renewed focus on country employment policy, D. Campbell, P. Egger, P. Ronnas, 2018, not published.

⁷³ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb286/pdf/esp-1.pdf>

- ▶ **2009 – The Global Job Pact** – This addresses the social and employment impact of the international financial and economic crisis. It promotes a productive recovery centred on investment, employment and social protection.
- ▶ **2010 – The Resolution on employment adopted by the 2010 International Labour Conference** – This underscores the importance of employment policies for promoting decent employment emphasizing the need to boost the quantity and quality of growth.⁷⁴
- ▶ **2014 – A second Resolution on employment adopted by the ILC** – This reasserts that full and decent employment should be a major goal of public policies for which a critical tool is social dialogue.
- ▶ **2019 – The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work adopted by the ILC** – This declared that it is “imperative to act with urgency to [...] shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.”

Box 2-1: The 2010 ILC Declaration on employment

The Resolution on employment recalls the inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive nature of the four Decent Work strategic objectives:

- ▶ the full economic and social growth potential of a society cannot be realized if people are not benefiting from a social protection floor;
- ▶ by the same token, social security schemes cannot be financed without a sound economic and employment base;
- ▶ freely chosen employment cannot be realized without respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work;
- ▶ a fair sharing of the benefits of productivity gains and growth and of adjustment burdens in times of economic crises cannot be assured without social dialogue; and
- ▶ productivity gains and employment growth cannot be achieved without an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise.

Source: Resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on employment, 2010.

Together, these agreements set out the key elements of an integrated and comprehensive employment policy, and the various drivers that must be harnessed to create quality jobs for all. They call for an ambitious approach to employment policies which is not about market policies alone but embraces crucial determinants of employment. In all cases, the aim is to make employment objectives a central goal of public policies. This Chapter briefly presents ILO policy and the normative framework which constitutes the backdrop to discussing employment policies, their goal, scope and purpose.

Box 2-3: The 2010 ILO Declaration for the Future of Work

As the ILO embarks on its second century, employment policies remain at the core of its mandate to promote the attainment of decent work. Part I (B) of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, states that it is ‘imperative to act with urgency to [...] shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all’. The Declaration reasserts that markets cannot make the future of work more inclusive and equitable and that it requires government policies to formulate a comprehensive package of education, training, industrial, macroeconomic, trade and labour market policies, as well as solid institutions to shape this process.

Source: Resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on employment, 2010.

⁷⁴ (ILO, 2010b).

Starting from the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)

When embarking on NEP processes, governments should be guided by the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). This is one of the four priority ILO Conventions, emphasizing the crucial importance of employment policy from the viewpoint of governance. Convention No. 122 creates a basic obligation on ratifying States to explicitly state their employment policies. It provides clear indications regarding the scope of an employment policy which should ensure full, productive and freely chosen work (Box 2-4). The Convention also calls for governments to incorporate full and productive employment, not as an afterthought of economic and social policies, but as a major goal. As of May 2021, Convention No. 122 had been ratified by 115 countries, with roughly the same proportions of low-income, middle-income countries and higher-income economies.⁷⁵ Employment is thus a key goal for all countries irrespective of their economic performance.

The core message of Convention No. 122 is that an employment policy should ensure jobs not only in quantity, but also in quality. By ratifying Convention No. 122, countries formally commit to making employment a national priority and 'declare and pursue' an employment policy 'designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment', while taking into account 'the stage and level of economic development and the mutual relationships between employment objectives and other economic and social objectives' (Article 1). Most countries that have adopted an NEP or are in the process of adopting one have ratified Convention No. 122 (see Annex 1).

Box 2-4: Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) in Summary

- ▶ An employment policy should ensure employment in quantity and in quality (full, productive and freely chosen employment).
- ▶ Member States should explicitly commit to employment, reflected in national legislation or key declarations of intent.
- ▶ Employment policies should take into account the level of economic development and should be in line with national practices.
- ▶ They should ensure that economic and social policies all take into account the objective of employment and that they mutually support it.
- ▶ Governments have to set up procedures or mechanisms through which employment-related measures can be decided upon and reviewed.
- ▶ Consultations with the social partners and key actors concerned, both at the earliest stages of policy formulation and during the implementation process, are essential.

Source: Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122).

Consultations on employment policies can be guided by Article 3 of Convention No. 122, the Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122), and the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169). These require that before formulating and implementing policies, governments should consider the experience and views of the persons likely to be affected – by consulting with their representatives, in particular the social partners. These consultations should include the views, for example, of those working in the rural sector and the informal economy. Finally, participation should not be limited to the formulation of the policy but should extend to implementation.

An integrated policy framework

An employment policy as envisioned by the ILO is thus an integrated policy framework that strives to influence the content of economic, sectoral and social policies. It provides an overall vision for all interventions and actors concerned with employment in a given country by promoting coherence between a vast range of instruments, mechanisms and policies – macroeconomic, trade, financial, industry,

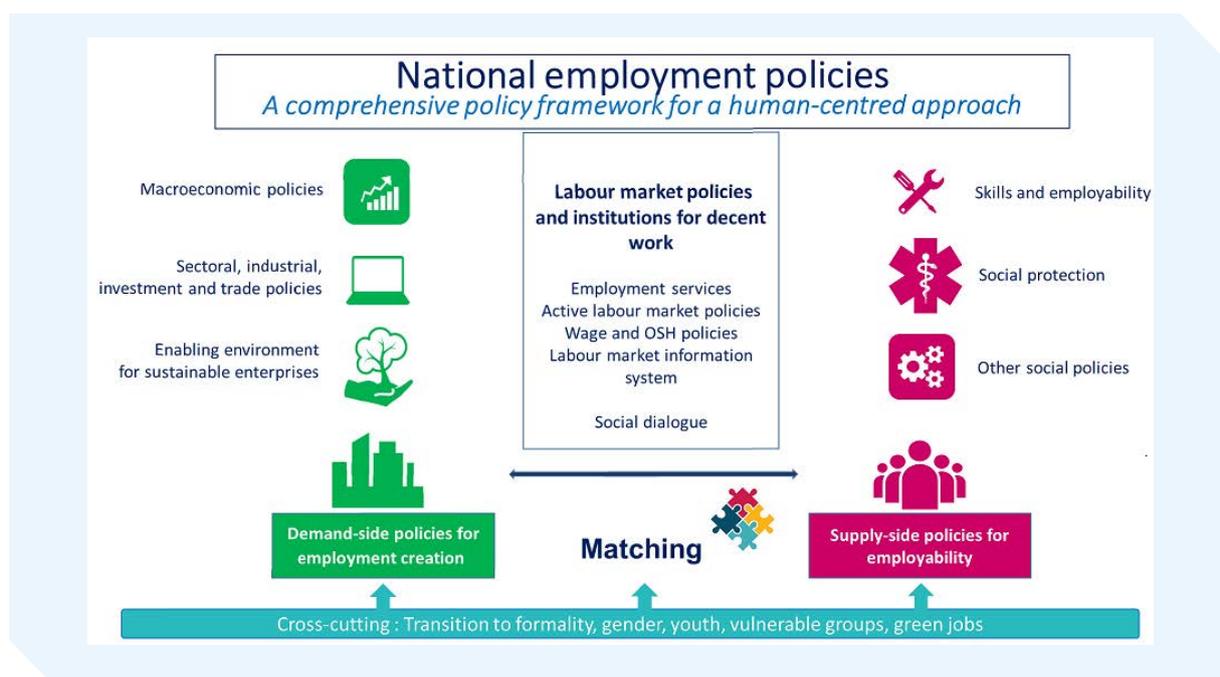
⁷⁵ Ratifications of C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122):
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO::P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312267, last visited on May 2021

agriculture and social protection – in order to mutually strengthen their impact on employment. It is not ‘just’ a social policy to fight against unemployment. Rather, it is a key component for promoting sustainable and inclusive development.

An employment policy is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach or a universal recipe that can be applied in all countries irrespective of the context. It is tailor-made and designed in the light of the national context and priorities. It is the result of trade-offs between the various elements of the ILO comprehensive framework. It builds on a comprehensive analysis of the country’s employment situation and is the product of broad discussions between actors with their own constraints and priorities, opening a series of possible policy mixes that need to be considered. It comes in different forms depending on the country situation, including standalone, comprehensive national policy documents (which are discussed in this report), and the integration of employment objectives in national/regional development plans, or in other national policies and strategies.

Priorities for action

The ILO therefore calls for an ambitious approach to employment policy⁷⁶ – placing employment at the heart of public policies and making policy interventions in a wide range of areas to generate quality employment for all.



Policies should cover both the demand and supply side as well as the interaction between the two. This includes:

Promote inclusive economic growth and generate demand for decent job creation

Macroeconomic conditions are essential levers for the growth of labour demand. In addition to macroeconomic frameworks favourable to employment, the quality of growth also matters in achieving better wages and more decent work. Well-designed sectoral policies are, therefore, also important in supporting structural transformation from lower-value to higher-value activities and supporting the growth

⁷⁶ See, ILO. 2010 – *The Resolution on employment adopted by the 2010 International Labour Conference* and ILC. 2014. *The Resolution on employment adopted by the 2014 International Labour Conference*.

of labour-intensive industries, while boosting agricultural productivity and facilitating the transition to formality in the off-farm sector.

Equip workers with the right skills for the labour market

This includes measures designed to strengthen the links between education on the one hand, and industrial/production policies on the other, as well as policies designed to ensure that the labour force has the appropriate education, skills and opportunities to join and remain in the labour market.

Support the development of sustainable enterprises

This includes measures to promote an environment conducive to the development of the financial sector that supports the real economy and the creation of enterprises that create decent employment and provide healthy and safe workplaces. This also includes all specific measures that help enable the entry, growth and maturity of enterprises.

Ensure employment quality and facilitate the interaction between labour supply and demand

Labour market institutions – which cover wage setting institutions, social dialogue as well as different aspects of labour legislation (law on the minimum wage, employment protection legislation, and the enforcement of legislation) – are key to improving the quality of jobs and fostering equality in the world of work. Intermediation and labour market policies, on the other hand, are essential to ensure the interaction between labour supply and demand, to assist workers in finding and retaining employment as well as facilitate inclusive labour mobility (occupational, social, geographic), as those in need of productive jobs are seldom found in the places, sectors and occupations where the best employment prospects are to be found.

Strengthen and guarantee the protection of workers

Policies to strengthen and guarantee the protection of workers are essential to provide workers with the security needed. Notably, this means the right to social protection for all workers (including informal workers), fighting against unacceptable forms of work, including child labour and forced labour, as well as measures to protect workers from shocks in the labour market, such as job loss.

Address inequality of opportunity

Inequality of opportunity refers to obstacles faced by workers in accessing decent employment. Fundamental concerns such as the gender dimension, the informal economy, the environmental sustainability and prevention of discrimination against minorities and people with disabilities, should be addressed both as a specific objective and from a cross-cutting perspective.⁷⁷

Promote decent work

This means that employment policies should pursue employment creation without compromising social protection, social dialogue and rights at work, as those objectives are ‘inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive’.⁷⁸ Employment policies are a main avenue for addressing the four decent work pillars in an interrelated way, as well as a platform for social partners and governments to accommodate their different interests and resolve the potential tensions between the sub-components of a comprehensive approach to decent employment (e.g. the balance between the flexibility in contracting and the protection of workers) and respond to the demand for decent work.

⁷⁷ ILO, “Guide for the formulation of national employment policies”, 2012.

⁷⁸ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/genericdocument/wcms_371208.pdf

Address the future of the world of work

Responses to challenges (and new opportunities) caused by new technology, demography and climate change should be an integral part of employment policies, both to mitigate the adverse impact of the fast changing context on employment, but also to foster the development of new, and more inclusive, labour markets.⁷⁹

A shared responsibility

Effective employment policies require that policies in a wide range of areas act in concert. As such, it is the responsibility of a diverse set of actors, including workers' and employers' organizations, key employment-generating line ministries, and cross-cutting ministries (such as economy and finance) as well as local governments and civil society representatives. In other words, employment policies cannot be limited solely to the areas under the responsibility of ministries in charge of employment. Rather, the cross-cutting nature of employment implies that it needs to be addressed by many actors, particularly ministries and institutions in charge of the various drivers of employment creation and acting on the supply of labour and the governance of employment. The formulation process supported by the ILO is therefore designed to mobilize all actors with an influence on the various employment drivers and facilitate their involvement at the implementation and monitoring stages.

ILO support to employment policies at country level

When creating national employment policies (NEPs), Member States can receive tailored advice from the ILO which offers knowledge building, policy advice, advocacy, capacity-building and technical cooperation to support governments and social partners in the design of integrated employment policies, and facilitate policy delivery and monitoring.

In 2012, the ILO published a Guide on developing an NEP, based on social dialogue and a participative process, with the involvement of public policymakers, social partners, trade unions and employers' organizations, and civil society. The Guide provides detailed information on employment policy processes and suggests seven major steps – from diagnosis and formulation to implementation and monitoring.⁸⁰ It shows that the design of a national employment policy is not a quick process. A typical cycle of policy development can take from six months to two years, during which the ILO's continued assistance can be provided. The ILO Guide provides a roadmap and prerequisites for a successful outcome of the design process. It shows how employment vision and goals should be defined at an early stage to guide the direction of the elaboration process. An in-depth and participatory employment diagnostic needs to be conducted as a basis for informed policy decisions. The purpose of the situation analysis is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the economy and the labour market, and the likely challenges for sustainable, inclusive, job-rich growth. As part of the formulation phase, it is necessary to prioritize issues that will be addressed in the NEP and to generate policy options to tackle the selected employment problems. Implementation and coordination mechanisms and a monitoring framework, as well as the cost of the policy, need to be defined.

As employment is a cross-cutting issue and the result of multi-layered policy interactions, broad-based participation and social dialogue are a necessary condition for formulating an NEP. A broad range of actors need to be involved in the policy space to ensure the acceptance and relevance of defined measures. This also ensure the basis for policy coherence. The multiplicity of institutions and actors involved, and the diversity of their intervention levels puts at the forefront the need for strong coordination. Hence, the Guide stresses the importance of having a clear institutional anchorage for the NEP as one of the keys in order to successfully follow it through all the stages from diagnostic to implementation. The Guide also stresses the importance of a clear and strong political commitment emanating from the highest levels of government as key to ensuring sustainability but also effective coordination between all relevant stakeholders. This approach has been evolving to adapt to the fast changing context and employment challenges. Based on

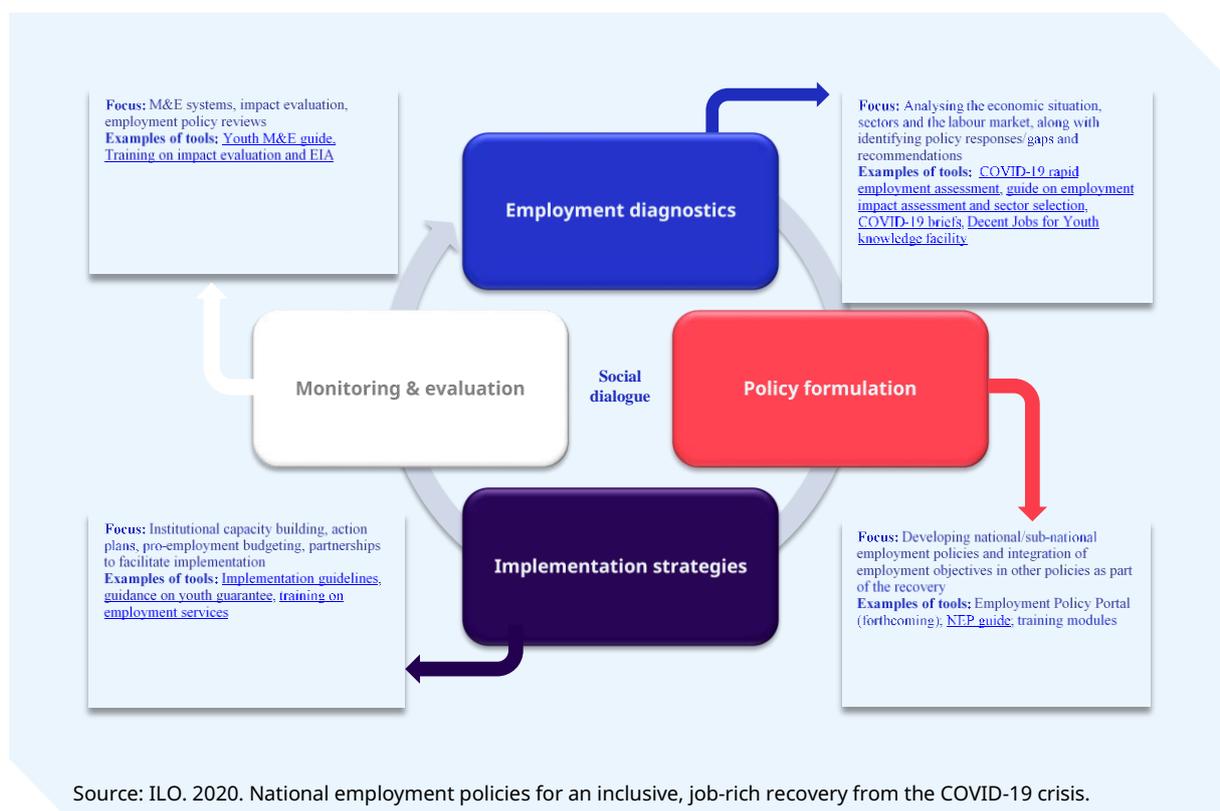
⁷⁹ ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, ILC, 2019.

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_711674.pdf

⁸⁰ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_188048.pdf.

evaluations of ILO's work on employment strategies⁸¹ and reflecting the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work⁸² which was adopted in 2019 at the [108th session of the International Labour Conference](#) (ILC), there is a call for a new generation of employment policies. These are designed to be more gender-responsive and to combine demand- and supply-side policy dimensions, with reinforced focus on the former. Moreover, they aim to specifically address country-specific future work challenges, which can be linked to demographic change, globalization, the care economy, climate change, technological progress, and/or the related emergence of new forms of work. Finally, the new generation of NEPs accords specific importance to effective delivery of policies. These should be matched with strong implementation measures, including monitoring and evaluation, so that they effectively translate into concrete results for the population.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILO is providing support for adapting national employment policies to include not only specific policy responses to the crisis, but also to readjust the policy process and cycle to better fit with the need of rapid policy responses as well as to the heightened and prolonged uncertainty. This includes strengthened and innovative data collection, assessments and analytical approaches to better capture the rapidly changing nature of labour markets; more agile and shorter policy cycles; more responsive implementation processes as well as increased emphasis on social dialogue with employers' and workers' organizations.⁸³



⁸¹ See for example https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_192221.pdf

⁸² <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/mission-and-objectives/centenary-declaration/lang-en/index.htm>

⁸³ ILO. 2020. "National employment policies for an inclusive, job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis" (Geneva).



► Chapter 3

The evolution of employment policies worldwide

Employment is one of the chief concern worldwide. For a growing number of countries, the formulation of an employment policy is an initial response to this. This chapter describes the expansion of such policies worldwide and the pressures and opportunities that have spurred their adoption.

Based on the ILO Employment Policy Gateway, this chapter reviews the current status of national employment policies, defined as standalone multidimensional strategies covering a range of subsets across supply and demand issues. Not all countries have separate and explicit policies. Some incorporate employment measures in national development plans or other national policies. This study does not address these plans, covering only standalone employment policies.

The incentive for adoption

Ratification of C122

By ratifying Convention No. 122, countries formally commit to making employment a national priority and “declare and pursue” an employment policy “designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment” (Article 1 of Convention No. 122). The first fundamental measure that a State must take with a view to implementing Convention No. 122 is to express its policy commitment to seeking full, productive and freely chosen employment, a commitment that is usually expressed through employment policies. The majority of countries that have adopted an NEP, or are in the process of adopting one, have ratified Convention No. 122 (see list in Annex 1).

However, ratification of an NEP is not necessarily followed by adoption. Indeed, some countries have adopted employment policies long before ratification – including Burkina Faso, Mali, Rwanda and Tanzania. On the other hand, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Madagascar, Peru, Senegal and Uganda, waited more than 40 years after their ratification of Convention No. 122 before adopting an NEP. Regardless of the sequence, around half of NEP documents expressly cite Convention No. 122 as the reference framework and basis of the policy.

The ‘job crisis’ helped put employment policies on the agenda from the early 2000s

Many countries have adopted employment policies because they have discovered that, despite years of sustained growth, the state of the labour market has remained less than satisfactory for large parts of the workforce. Hence the need to go beyond scattered employment programmes and adopt well-articulated employment policies integrated with other national strategies (Box 3-1). This was evident from the early 2000s, for example, when ‘jobs crises’ helped put employment policies on the agenda.

Box 3-1: Morocco’s need for public action on employment

The relatively sustained growth during the last years was not sufficient to create enough jobs, in quantity and quality [...]. This situation requires proactive and explicit public action on employment – in the form of an employment strategy- breaking with the traditional “sectoral” approach to employment which had prevailed until then. Thus, the National Employment Strategy (NES) acknowledges the cross-cutting nature of employment and that a wide array of measures cutting across both macro- and micro-economic dimensions and addressing both labour supply and demand are necessary to ensure a fair redistribution of growth benefits to all citizens’.

The adoption of employment policies also increased as countries became more democratic and improved their governance. Most electorates attach a high priority to decent jobs, putting pressure on governments to come up with national employment policies.

The 2009 global financial crisis marked a turning point in the formulation of comprehensive employment policies

A further impetus in many countries was the global financial crisis of 2009 which accentuated underlying problems and catalysed the adoption of NEPs. Of 69 countries which currently have an employment policy, 59 initiated the process from 2008 onwards (Figure 3-1). Many policy documents adopted after this date, as in Sri Lanka for example, refer to the 2009 crisis and position the NEP as a way of attenuating the effects of the crisis.

Beyond the growth of employment policies, the 2009 crisis refocused the need for multidimensional and integrated employment policies in parallel with economic development strategies. Following the Asian crisis of 1997, the Republic of Korea began formulating its first employment policy focused on active employment policies. Then, in the wake of the 2009 crisis, the country started formulating an NEP, paving the way to a development model centred on employment. In Mali, the first employment policy was developed in 1998 to tackle the effects of the structural adjustment policy and economic liberalization. As with the Republic of Korea, the measures included by Mali in its NEP in 1998 were those traditionally associated with active labour market policies. These included employment-intensive investment programmes and, to a lesser extent, measures targeting the expansion and improvement of the technical and vocational training system and improved labour market intermediation. Conversely, the 2015 NEP for Mali includes a multi-layered and multi-dimensional approach to employment.

The 2009 crisis led numerous international agencies to take coordinated actions to favour an upturn in employment. Almost all employment policy documents reviewed in this study refer to the commitments made at international level, with the ILO Global Jobs Pact and the Post-2015 Development Agenda in first places.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is confirming once again that employment policies can be successful entry points to respond to crises

In 2020, labour market disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic are confirming the crucial role of employment policies, not only to mitigate the short-term impacts of the crisis, but also to promote recovery and strengthen the resilience of economies and labour markets to adverse shocks in the long run.⁸⁴ Beyond preventing immediate collapse, the call is for an overarching framework to propel an employment-rich economic reactivation. NEPs currently under formulation with the support of the ILO are already being adapted to focus on COVID responses (e.g. Armenia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa and Tunisia).

Beyond the international context, specific situations have propelled Governments to initiate an employment policy process

Employment policy processes have also been stimulated by socio-political crises specific to certain countries. A notable example was the Arab Spring, in which people's claims and protests also centred around access to employment. From 2010 onwards, this led to the emergence of NEPs in Arab countries such as Morocco and Tunisia. Other countries that have experienced internal crises, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Liberia and Mali, have also seen employment policies as a way of promoting post-conflict peace and economic and social development.

Irrespective of countries' development, making more and better employment possible for all is becoming the major concern and challenge of policymakers across the globe

Experience everywhere shows that what is good for growth is not automatically good for employment and that scattered interventions and multiple programmes do not lead to sustainable results. Decision-makers are now propelled to go beyond the short-term 'firefighting' strategy towards addressing the structural roots of employment deficits through integrated strategies that bring the coherence necessary to achieve

⁸⁴ ILO. 2020. "National employment policies for an inclusive, job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis", Geneva.

employment creation goals, both in quantity and in quality. As analysed below, employment policies are not only 'emergency' responses in time of crisis, but are becoming a core component of Governments' public policies.

Employment policy scorecard

A large number of countries have formulated standalone employment policies over the past two decades. Out of the 129 countries included in the database, 84 have initiated a process to formulate a standalone national employment policy. Of these, 69 have adopted an NEP, while 15 are in the process of doing so. 15 countries have adopted other types of NEP, such as the integration of employment objectives in their national development plans or other targeted strategies such as youth, rural or informal employment strategies. The remaining 30 countries have neither initiated a process nor adopted a policy (Table 3-1).

Since 2011, employment policies have become a public intervention instrument in an increasing number and variety of countries

As indicated in Figure 3-1, adoption has been accelerating. Over the decade 2000-2010,⁸⁵ 19 countries adopted an NEP, but over the decade 2011-2020, 50 countries did so, a 2.6-fold increase.⁸⁶ Since then another 15 have started to formulate policies, so this growth is likely to continue. In addition, there are countries that have indicated an interest to the ILO but have not yet started on the process. These include Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, The Gambia, Grenada, Jamaica, Oman and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

► **Table 3-1 Overview of employment policies, 2000-2021**

Table 3-1 Overview of employment policies, 2000-2021	
2000-2010	China* (2002, 2005, 2008), Nigeria (2002), Madagascar* (2003), Republic of Korea* (2003, 2008, 2010), Nepal (2005), Zambia* (2005), Azerbaijan* (2006), Mozambique* (2006), Republic of Moldova* (2007), Rwanda* (2007), Algeria* (2008), Burkina Faso* (2008), Cameroon* (2008), Niger* (2008), United Republic of Tanzania (2008), Liberia (2009), Saudi Arabia (2009), Zimbabwe (2009), Senegal (2010).
2011-2021	Benin (2011, 2020), Iraq* (2011), Jordan* (2011), North Macedonia* (2011, 2015), Peru* (2011), Philippines* (2011, 2021), Serbia* (2011), Timor-Leste (2017), Uganda* (2011), Armenia* (2012), China* (2012, 2015, 2018, 2020), Côte d'Ivoire (2012, 2016), Guatemala* (2012, 2017), Togo* (2012), Sri Lanka* (2012), Russian Federation* (2012), Comoros* (2013), Kenya (2013), Namibia* (2013), Republic of Korea* (2013, 2017), Kyrgyzstan* (2013), Albania* (2014), Barbados* (2014), Burundi (2014), Costa Rica* (2014), Panama* (2014), Seychelles (2014), Cambodia* (2015), Ghana (2015), Madagascar* (2015), Mali* (2015), Montenegro* (2015), Morocco* (2015), Nepal (2015), São Tome and Principe (2015), Sierra Leone (2015), Central African Republic* (2016), Democratic Republic of Congo, (2016), Ethiopia (2016, 2020), Kazakhstan* (2016), Republic of Moldova* (2016), Mozambique* (2016), Mongolia* (2016), Samoa (2016), Cameroon* (2017), El Salvador* (2017), Honduras* (2017), Malawi (2017), Nigeria (2017), Senegal* (2017), Azerbaijan* (2018), Chile* (2018), Fiji* (2018), Gabon* (2018), United Arab Emirates (2018), Georgia* (2019), Mauritania* (2019), Rwanda* (2019), Saudi Arabia (2019), Somalia (2019), Sudan* (2019), Zambia* (2019), Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) (2020).

⁸⁵ China and South Korea have adopted several NEPs during 2000-2010. China adopted NEPs in 2002, 2005 and 2008 during this period (and in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2020). South Korea adopted NEPs in 2003, 2008 and 2010 (and 2013 and 2017).

⁸⁶ Some countries adopted several NEPs during these two periods (Azerbaijan, Benin, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Madagascar, North Macedonia, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Korea and Zambia).

Countries engaged in a formulation process

Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Botswana, Chad*, Colombia, Congo, Guinea*, Lebanon*, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea*, Paraguay*, South Africa, Tajikistan*, Tunisia*, Uzbekistan*.

Countries with other type of NEP**

Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia*, Brazil*, Dominican Republic*, Ecuador*, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, Jamaica*, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Trinidad and Tobago*, Turkmenistan*, Viet Nam*

Countries without an NEP and with no process under way

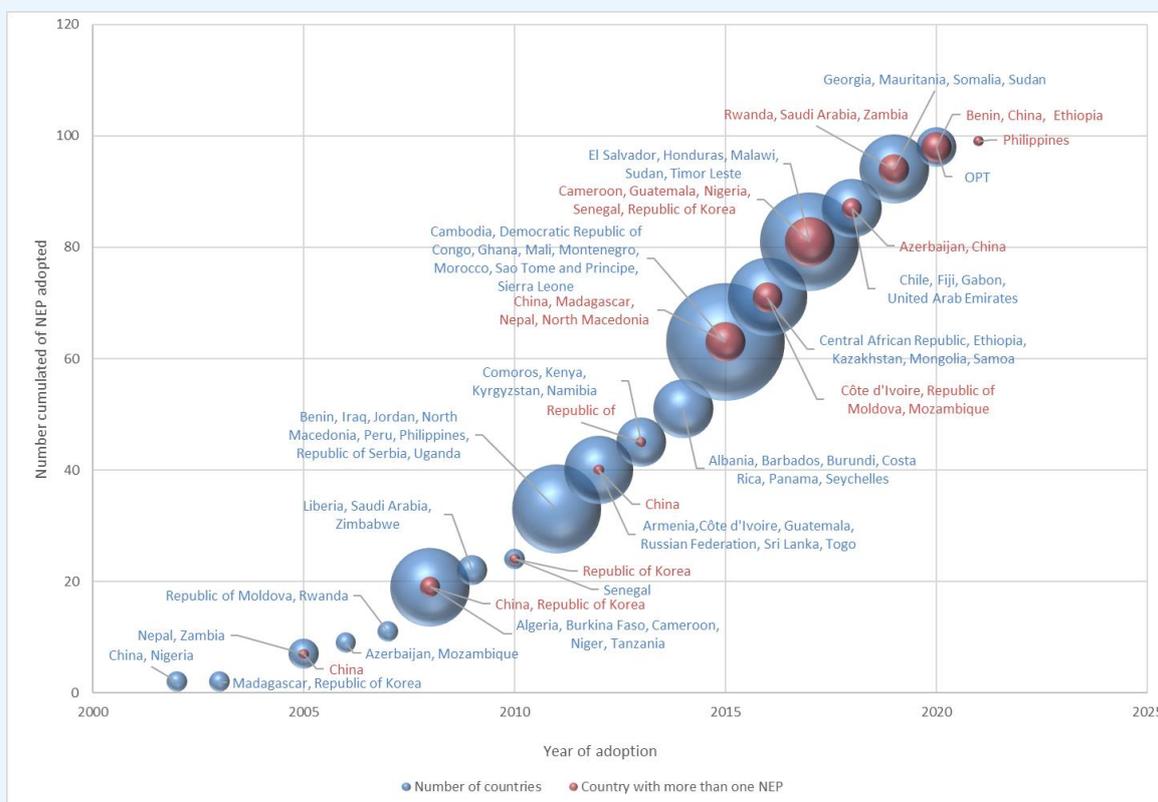
Afghanistan, Angola, Bahrain, Belarus*, Djibouti*, Eritrea, Eswatini, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India*, Islamic Republic of Iran*, Kuwait, Lesotho, Libya*, Malaysia, Republic of Maldives, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua*, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Qatar, Suriname*, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand*, Ukraine*, Uruguay*, Yemen*

Note: *Countries that have ratified the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) (see Annex 1).

** Those countries do not have a standalone NEP, but may have other relevant employment policies (such as the integration of employment objectives in national development plans or in other policies or more targeted strategies such as youth, rural or informal employment strategies).

Source: Based on the sample of the 129 countries covered by the ILO Employment Policy Gateway as of May 2021.

► Figure 3-1 Countries adopting standalone national employment policies, 2000-2021



Note: The size of the blue sphere represents the number of policies adopted in that year, while the size of the red spheres indicates the number of countries adopting an additional policy in that year.

Of the 84 countries that have adopted an NEP, or are in the process of doing so, 38 are in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Europe and Central Asia (14), Asia and the Pacific (12), Latin America and the Caribbean (10) and North Africa and the Arab States (10). The concentration of NEPs in Africa is probably because the countries of sub-Saharan Africa are now facing major issues of development and structural transformation that inevitably lead to multidimensional employment strategies. In sub-Saharan Africa, 84.4 per cent of the countries included in the database have formulated or are in the process of formulating an NEP. In Europe and Central Asia, the proportion is 82.4 per cent, in North Africa and the Arab States 55.6 per cent, in Asia and the Pacific 50 per cent, and in Latin America and the Caribbean 40 per cent.

The nature and content of an NEP will be influenced by a country's level of economic development and other factors such as political commitment. This affects the resources that the country can allocate to employment, its institutional and human capacities, and therefore the eventual success in implementation – which will be further analysed in Part III. Table 3-2 lists the countries that have adopted a standalone NEP or are in the process of doing so, by country income group.

► **Table 3-2 Countries that have adopted an NEP or are in the process of doing so, by per capita income**

Low-income countries	Middle-income countries		High-income countries
	Lower-middle	Upper-middle	
Burkina Faso	Algeria	Albania	Barbados
Burundi	Bangladesh	Armenia	Chile
Central African Republic	Benin	Azerbaijan	Republic of Korea
Chad	Cambodia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mauritius
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Cameroon	Botswana	Panama
Ethiopia	Comoros	China	Saudi Arabia
Guinea	Congo	Colombia	Seychelles
Liberia	Côte d'Ivoire	Costa Rica	United Arab Emirates
Madagascar	El Salvador	Fiji	
Malawi	Ghana	Gabon	
Mali	Honduras	Georgia	
Mozambique	Kenya	Guatemala	
Niger	Kyrgyzstan	Iraq	
Rwanda	Mauritania	Jordan	
Sierra Leone	Republic of Moldova	Kazakhstan	
Somalia	Mongolia	Lebanon	
Sudan	Morocco	Montenegro	
Tajikistan	Nepal	Namibia	
Togo	Nigeria	North Macedonia	
Uganda	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Paraguay	
	Papua New Guinea	Peru	
	Philippines	Russian Federation	
	São Tome and Príncipe	Samoa	
	Senegal	Serbia	
	Sri Lanka	South Africa	
	United Republic of Tanzania		
	Timor-Leste		
	Tunisia		
	Uzbekistan		
	Zambia		
	Zimbabwe		

Notes: For the current 2021 fiscal year, low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of \$1,035 or less in 2019; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,036 and \$4,045; upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,046 and \$12,535; high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,536 or more.

See: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

Sources: International Labour Office, Employment Policy Gateway.

Of the 84 that have adopted an NEP or are in the process of doing so, 20 are low-income countries (LICs) of which 19 are in sub-Saharan Africa, 56 are middle-income countries, of which 31 lower-middle-income, and 25 are upper-middle-income. Eight are high-income countries (see Table 3-2).

Between 2002 and 2010 most of the adopting countries were sub-Saharan African LICs. But since 2011, adoption has been more widespread, showing that employment policies have become a public intervention instrument in all countries. Many more countries around the world now have employment policies – reflecting a profound change in the way employment issues are understood in middle- and even high-income economies.

National employment policies are not one-off exercises

As indicated in Figure 3-1, in an increasing number of countries the process has become institutionalized and continuous. Of the 69 countries that adopted an NEP between 2000 and 2021, some had already adopted several such policies. Azerbaijan, Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guatemala, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, and Zambia have adopted a second-generation NEP; Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of North Macedonia, Madagascar and Senegal are formulating their third employment policy, while the Republic of Korea is implementing its 5th NEP and China its 7th NEP. Moreover, 12 other countries are currently formulating second generation employment policies.⁸⁷ Employment policies are thus not just isolated emergency responses but are becoming key and continuous components of national public policy interventions.

Box 3-2 Employment priorities incorporated into national development plans

The incorporation of employment into national development plans is a key area in which the ILO supports its constituents. Development plans are designed to coordinate all national policies and determine the way in which macroeconomic, structural and social programmes may make it possible to attain development objectives. This means that national development plans constitute the ultimate entry point for reaffirming the cross-cutting nature of employment and ensuring that employment policies are consistent with other national policies.

An increasing number of countries have incorporated employment into their development framework alongside the adoption of explicit employment policies; some even refer to employment in the title, such as Cameroun, Djibouti and Togo which have adopted 'growth and employment promotion strategies'. In Rwanda, the country's medium-term plan, the 'National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024', under the economic transformation pillar, aims to facilitate the creation of 1,500,000 decent and productive jobs through accelerated private sector led growth and increased productivity. In Uganda, the theme for the country's 3rd National Development Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25 is sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and wealth creation. The plan aims to achieve an average economic growth rate of close to 7 per cent and creation of an average of 512,000 jobs annually, among other higher level targets. A growing number of countries make reference to employment policy in their national development plan, either by mentioning the need to implement the existing employment policy, or by highlighting the need to adopt such a policy. This is the case, for example, in Colombia, where Article 75 of the national development plan indicates that 'the national Government, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, will adopt a national policy for decent employment to promote job creation, the transition to formal employment and the protection of workers in the private and public sectors ... and that regional entities will formulate policies for decent employment in their development plans, in line with guidance from the Ministry of Labour. In Costa Rica, objective 2 of the 2014-2018 national development plan on 'economic growth and job creation' gave rise to a decision by the Governing Council to formulate an employment policy under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Other countries have not (yet) adopted separate, standalone policy documents but have set out the main employment guidelines in their national development plan. This is the case notably in the Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, Grenada, Indonesia, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine, which have integrated their employment policy into their development plan. In Ecuador, for example, objective 9 of the 2013-2017 national plan is to "guarantee decent work for all".

⁸⁷ Albania, Armenia, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Niger, Peru, Samoa, Serbia, Sudan and United Republic of Tanzania.

Of the 44 countries that do not yet have standalone employment policies, various have already requested support from the International Labour Office to formulate an NEP. Other countries (15) do not have employment policies as separate documents but incorporate such policies in their national development plan (Box 3-2) or have adopted strategies targeted at specific groups or areas. Ecuador, Egypt and Republic of Marshall Islands, for example, have action plans for youth employment. The Ministry of Labour in Argentina is in the process of developing a national green jobs strategy. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has adopted a rural employment strategies while Colombia is formulating a similar policy. Some countries have adopted formalization strategies (e.g. South Africa, Turkey). Still other countries, such as Belarus and Tajikistan, have government programmes for job creation.

Finally, in various countries, standalone NEPs and other types of employment policies coexist. For example, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire have an explicit and separate NEP along with a youth employment strategy, while Cameroon, Costa Rica, North Macedonia, Paraguay and Peru have an NEP together with a formalization strategy (see Box 3-2 for more examples).

Employment policies have thus become much more widely adopted around the world. The next chapter looks more closely at these policies and how they have developed over time.



► Chapter 4

Participatory processes

No single government agency can, on its own, solve pressing and complex employment issues. Instead, a wide range of stakeholders need to coordinate their efforts, which is a key goal of employment policy processes. This chapter reviews two decades of employment policies looking at how participation by different actors has changed over time, in form, depth and scope.

Over the last 20 years, NEP processes supported by the ILO have opened to a wider group of stakeholders, facilitating new frameworks and enhancing social dialogue to generate a consensus around employment solutions. This is evident from an analysis of 69 countries that have officially adopted an NEP.⁸⁸ The review covers two periods of NEP adoption – 2000-2010 (early NEPs) and 2011-2020 (latest NEPs).

Employment policies enhance social dialogue

The ‘natural’ stakeholders are ministries in charge of labour and employment, employers’ organizations and trade unions. Dialogue between the tripartite social partners has helped shape NEP processes, though the extent and outcomes have varied from one country to another. Over the last two decades, social dialogue around employment policymaking has also embraced new actors, such as the ministries in charge of economy and finance and civil society. However, important actors such as representatives of informal and rural workers are not always represented.

Tripartite social dialogue has supported employment policy processes in the discussion of employment policies in all countries

Given their mandate, ministries in charge of labour and employment have a key role to play in improving labour market governance – coordinating employment issues and monitoring outcomes, while also advocating for employment goals. As such, they have been the main proponent of employment policies in almost all countries under review. Also vital are the two social partners, workers’ and employers’ organizations, which have experience and practical understanding of the problems associated with work and business and can provide decision-makers with relevant information and advocate for decent employment. In every country for which information is available, workers’ and employers’ organizations have therefore been part of NEP formulation and have been invited to voice their concerns.

A priority for the ILO is to support employers’ and workers’ organizations and tripartite institutions in an informed and effective dialogue on employment policy. The social partners have been consulted in many ways. In some cases, they have been involved like any other actors; elsewhere they have been consulted as special stakeholders through specific working groups or consultative forums. With ILO support, many countries have organized workshops or bilateral meetings with workers and/or employers through which they could make recommendations – as in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guatemala (2017), Mongolia (2011), Azerbaijan, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia (2019), Philippines (2021).⁸⁹ In Gabon, for example, given the lack of consensus on some aspects on the Labour Code (hiring and firing measures), the ILO supported tripartite dialogue prior to the tripartite validation of the NEP. In Azerbaijan, a tripartite working group specifically dedicated to designing the NEP was set up under the National Tripartite Commission on Economic and Social Affairs (NTC). It played a crucial role in the finalization of the NEP document in 2018 and ensuring social partners’ involvement in the process. Burkina Faso held two workshops with ILO support – one with employers’ organizations and one with workers’ organizations. This resulted in various proposals for

⁸⁸ Some countries have formulated several employment policies over time. In these cases, the date in brackets will indicate to which NEP processes the analysis refers.

⁸⁹ See “National Employment Policies: A guide for workers’ organizations”, International Labour Office, Geneva (2015).

improving the content of the NEP – in addition to their suggestions already included in the preliminary draft. Annex 2 indicates the impact of participatory processes on the content of the employment policy by establishing the extent which proposals made by the social partners were included in the final NEP documents and action plans. In the event, in Burkina Faso more than half of the proposals made by the workers' organizations and employers were included, whether partially or in full.

Other countries have held employment policy discussions through existing tripartite social dialogue mechanisms (see Table 4-2). In the Republic of Korea, for example, the social partners have been actively involved in various steering structures. In addition, successive employment policies adopted by the Government have been discussed in the tripartite Economic and Social Development Commission, ensuring that employment policy was the result of tripartite agreement – referred to as the 'Grand Social Compromise' (1998 and 2009) and then the 'Job Pact' (2013).⁹⁰ In Rwanda, the NEP passed through the National Labour Council, which reviewed and approved the policy before its official adoption by the Government. Employment policy has also been debated in existing tripartite dialogue forums before being officially adopted by the Government, as in Albania, Azerbaijan, Guatemala (2017), North Macedonia (2015), Panama and Peru.

The strength of these institutional social dialogue committees and, more importantly, the position of unions and employers' organizations, can enhance the prospects of meaningful inputs. But much will depend on the state of tripartism. In countries where the environment is favourable, and where workers' and employers' organizations are legitimate, independent and representative, social dialogue has a greater chance of leading to a successful process. In Eastern Europe, for example, the formulation of an employment policy through tripartite dialogue is a condition for joining the European Union,⁹¹ which meant that social dialogue was a central element of the approach to formulating an NEP.

Conversely, in countries where social dialogue is strained, or where the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining are neither recognized nor respected, or where social partner institutions are heavily fragmented, social partners have not always been able to participate in an effective and sustained manner. Sometimes, one social partner can be very influential while the other finds it difficult to be heard. There can also be friction between the government and workers' or employers' organizations. In Zambia, for example, for the 2005 NEP, social dialogue was not fully effective because there was no clear definition of the roles of each party and the ministry responsible for employment was perceived to be biased towards workers' organizations.⁹²

Also, if the participatory process is hastily organized to short deadlines, or the government, does not recognize the value of social dialogue, the social partners will have little motivation to fully engage in the process. In Costa Rica, for example, when the workers' organizations expressed reservations about the terms of the participative process, the employers' organization expressed their disagreement.⁹³ Similarly, in El Salvador, the employers' organizations manifested their lack of accord with the NEP consultation process. In Tunisia in 2012, the UGTT, the main trade union federation, as well as line ministries, complained about a lack of involvement. The resulting draft National Employment Strategy was not recognized, which blocked its adoption.⁹⁴

Conversely, in other cases, the processes of developing an NEP can revitalize social dialogue. In some countries, negotiations on conflictive issues such as pension reform, the revision of the labour code, or wage negotiations, have been tense or blocked. In these circumstances, discussions on employment policy, which are less controversial, can be a point of entry for restoring social dialogue and strengthening tripartism. In Morocco, for example, when work began on the national employment strategy, the workers' organizations had just withdrawn from negotiations on the revision of the Labour Code. However, the more consensual

⁹⁰ "Employment policy mechanisms in the Republic of Korea", ILO, 2014.

⁹¹ See Conditions of membership, Chapter of the acquis, Chapter 19 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis_en

⁹² NELMP situation analysis, ILO (2015).

⁹³ Rodríguez and Jarquín, *Sistematización y análisis del proceso de implementación de la Estrategia Nacional de Empleo y Desarrollo Productivo de Costa Rica*, ILO, 2017.

⁹⁴ It was not until 2016-2017 that a new employment strategy formulation process was launched by the Tunisian Government.

matter of the employment strategy united the social partners and the Government around a topic of common interest and re-established a climate favourable to tripartism. The participants all concluded that tripartism had been an undeniable success of the national employment strategy, despite a difficult social dialogue context.⁹⁵

Stakeholder participation grew throughout the decades beyond the tripartite partners to include other strategic actors for employment

Over the past two decades, beyond the traditional tripartite partners, there has also been greater involvement of other strategic actors. At the start of the 2000s, the processes involved only a few other stakeholders, usually other ministries such as those responsible for social affairs and for education, including technical and vocational education. Other important line ministries directly responsible for policies that contribute to job creation were usually absent – such as those for industry, agriculture, infrastructure, tourism or commerce. Similarly, the discussions seldom involved the ministries of planning/economy and finance which are crucial players in integrating employment into planning and budgetary processes. Table 4-1 shows that, before 2011, ministries of economy and finance took part in only 28 per cent of NEP design processes. This raises questions about the ownership of national employment policies by strategic actors in those countries – mainly LICs in Africa. Indeed, in many early NEPs, lack of ownership by the economy and finance ministries delayed adoption or implementation. In Uganda, for example, the failure to take ownership by the Ministry of Economy was one reason why 15 years passed between the first draft of the NEP and its formal adoption in 2011.⁹⁶ Recent processes have been more broadly based, having been extended to economic and sectoral ministries that act as ‘job creators’ – including agriculture, industry, trade and infrastructure. Most countries (93 per cent) have ensured the participation of the economy and finance ministries.

ILO support and effort has also helped extend policy discussions to other actors key to employment but that were previously absent from the NEP discussions. These have included central banks (e.g. Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, North Macedonia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka), universities or national research institutes (e.g. Guatemala, Mozambique (2016), Panama, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka), national statistics offices (e.g. Albania, Morocco, Mozambique, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Sri Lanka), regional actors (e.g. Albania, Guatemala, Indonesia, the Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique (2016), Philippines and Zambia 2019), as well as other technical and financial partners.

As well as having more diverse actors, recent processes have also had more in-depth engagement, particularly from the critical ministries of economy and finance.

The ministry of finance/economy can ensure that budgetary allocations and fiscal policies are in line with employment objectives, while coordinating development priorities and ensure that employment is addressed as a cross-cutting issue on which all public policies should converge.

Indeed, in some recent NEP processes, the ministry of economy or finance has been in the driving seat next to the ministry of employment. In Costa Rica, China, Republic of Korea, and Panama, for example, the ministry responsible for labour and employment led the formulation process in close collaboration with the ministries of economy and finance. In Guatemala, the Ministry of Labour worked closely with the Secretariat for Planning to ensure that the strategy was aligned with its public policy formulation guide, and to secure the approval of the Secretariat of Planning prior to the adoption of the NEP. In Cameroon (2017), the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the Ministry of Employment were co-leaders of the formulation of the NEP action plan, and the Ministry of Economy will then use the action plan for formulating the new national development plan (2020-2030). In Serbia (2011), the process was led by the Ministry of Economy, while in Mongolia leadership in the development of the national employment policy was in the hands of the National Development Authority. Active engagement of ministries of economy and finance can ensure that employment issues are at the top of the political agenda and integrated into national development plans – as in Burkina Faso, Cameroun and Mali (2017). However, there may also be risks involved if the ministry of

⁹⁵ Serrière (2016).

⁹⁶ Harasty et al. (2012), p. 149.

economy is leading the process on its own, as economic ministries are not always familiar with employment issues and tend to be less steeped in the traditions of social dialogue. Thus they do not automatically rely to the same extent on tripartite consultative processes - which in turn may lead to major stumbling blocks with regard to ownership. For instance, Botswana's NEP formulation process has faced some delays due to changes in leadership from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Another challenge has been the inconsistency of tripartite involvement.. Similarly, in some countries of Europe and Central Asia, employment and labour sits with the ministry of economy and finance, which in some cases may have a different employment vision and approach.⁹⁷ In some cases, this may result in a narrow vision of employment limited to active labour market policies (e.g. Ukraine).

► **Table 4-1 Characteristics of NEP formulation**

Country	Year of adoption	Duration of formulation	Participants other than social partners and ministries responsible for employment			Dialogue	
			Economy/finance ministry	Civil society	Other*	Regional	Local
Low-income countries							
Burkina Faso	2008	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Burundi	2014	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Central African Republic	2016	1-2 years	No	No	No	No	No
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2015	> 5 years	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	2016	2-3 years	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liberia	2009	1-2 years	No	No	Yes	No	No
Madagascar	2003	n.a.	No	Yes	Yes	n.a.	n.a.
Madagascar	2015	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Malawi	2017	> 5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mali	2015	n.a.	Yes	No	No	No	No
Mozambique	2006	1-2 years	No	No	Yes	No	No
Mozambique	2016	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Niger	2008	n.a.	No	No	yes	No	No
Rwanda	2007	1-2 years	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Rwanda	2019	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	2015	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Somalia	2019	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sudan	2019	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Togo	2012	< 1 year	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Uganda	2011	n.a.	No	No	Yes	No	No
Lower-middle-income countries							
Algeria	2008	n.a.	No	No	Yes	No	No
Benin	2011	1-2 years	No	No	Yes	No	No
Benin	2020	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes.	No	Yes

⁹⁷ This has been the case for Albania and Serbia, and now in Montenegro and Ukraine.

Country	Year of adoption	Duration of formulation	Participants other than social partners and ministries responsible for employment			Dialogue	
			Economy/finance ministry	Civil society	Other*	Regional	Local
Cambodia	2015	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cameroon	2008	1-2 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Cameroon	2017	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Comoros	2013	2-3 years	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	n.a.	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Côte d'Ivoire	2016	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
El Salvador	2017	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	n.a.	n.a.
Ghana	2015	4-5 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Honduras	2017	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Kenya	2013	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Kyrgyzstan	2013	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mauritania	2019	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Republic of Moldova*	2007	< 1 year	Yes	No	No	No	No
Republic of Moldova	2016	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mongolia	2016	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Morocco	2015	2-3 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Nepal	2005	< 1 year	No	No.	Yes	No.	No.
Nepal	2015	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Nigeria	2002	n.a.	No	No	Yes	n.a.	n.a.
Nigeria	2017	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	n.a.	n.a.
Occupied Palestinian Territory	2020	4-5 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Philippines	2011	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sao Tome and Principe	2015	< 1 year	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Senegal	2010	n.a.	No	No	Yes	No	No
Senegal	2017	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sri Lanka	2012	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
United Republic of Tanzania	2008	n.a.	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Timor-Leste	2017	1-2 years	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Zambia	2005	n.a.	No	No	Yes	n.a.	n.a.
Zambia	2019	> 5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zimbabwe	2009	n.a.	No	No	Yes	n.a.	n.a.

Upper-middle-income countries

Albania	2014	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Armenia	2012	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Azerbaijan	2006	< 1 year	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Azerbaijan	2018	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
China	2002	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Country	Year of adoption	Duration of formulation	Participants other than social partners and ministries responsible for employment			Dialogue	
			Economy/finance ministry	Civil society	Other*	Regional	Local
China	2020	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Costa Rica	2014	< 1 year	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fiji	2018	1-2 years	Yes	No	No	No	No
Gabon	2018	1-2 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Georgia	2019	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guatemala	2012	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guatemala	2017	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Iraq	2011	n.a.	Yes	n.a.	Yes	No	No
Jordan	2011	n.a.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Kazakhstan	2016	< 1 year	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Montenegro	2015	< 1 year	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Namibia	2013	2-3 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
North Macedonia	2011	< 1 year	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
North Macedonia	2015	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Peru	2011	4-5 years	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Russian Federation	2012	< 1 year	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Samoa	2016	4-5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Serbia	2011	> 5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
High-income countries							
Barbados	2014	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Chile	2018	< 1 year	Yes	No	No	No	No
Republic of Korea	2003	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Republic of Korea	2017	1-2 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Panama	2014	< 1 year	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Saudi Arabia	2009	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	2019	1-2 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Seychelles	2014	2-3 years	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
United Arab Emirates	2018	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

*This can include representatives of sectoral ministries, academia, think tanks, development partners, private sector, etc.

A new aspect also concerns the participation of civil society organizations representing categories that are disadvantaged in the labour market and at risk of social exclusion

There is now also greater participation from civil society (see Table 4-1). The early NEP processes involved very few civil society organizations: CSOs took part in only 22 per cent of NEP processes and those which did participate were not very representative; typically federations of non-governmental organizations or CSOs representing general interests or involved in advocacy.⁹⁸ More recent processes have seen greater involvement from CSOs (60 per cent) and representatives from specific segments of the population, for

⁹⁸ Harasty et al. (2012), p. 41.

example young people in Mozambique and Tunisia, laid-off workers and migrants in China, or people with disabilities in Jordan, Madagascar and Rwanda (2019). In certain countries, such as Guatemala, specific dialogue frameworks have been organized with representatives of women, young people and indigenous peoples.

Nevertheless, there is still generally less participation from associations for young people, women, unemployed and others. In Sri Lanka, for example, out of the 67 members of the ten thematic groups charged with drawing up an outline for the NEP, only one or two had representatives of non-governmental organizations.⁹⁹ There were similar limitations in Burkina Faso, Morocco and Nepal.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, employers are mainly represented by employers' organizations alone, and, except in Sri Lanka, rarely by chambers of commerce or professional federations. In the future, the participation of the latter could be encouraged so as to enlarge perspectives on private sector development and ensure a broader commitment by business to implement the policy at a later stage.

Further efforts still need to be made to include certain segments of the labour force (such as informal and rural workers) that continue to be under-represented in formulation processes.

In most countries that have adopted an NEP or initiated a formulation process, informal and/or rural employment accounts for a significant proportion, or even the majority, of the workforce. This is especially true of low-income countries. Those in the informal and rural economy need organizations and representation to pursue their employment interests. While workers' organizations in certain countries attempt to reform their governance structure to allow the representation of workers from the informal economy,¹⁰¹ it is sometimes the case that the informal workforce (including the agricultural workforce) is not covered by trade union representation, meaning its voice is not heard in national discussions on employment. In contexts where large shares of the labour force are employed in the informal economy, it is key for associations for informal and rural workers, if they exist, to participate in order to achieve the primary

objective of an NEP, namely to increase access to quality employment for the greatest number, in conditions that allow them to escape poverty (productive jobs).

► Box 4-1: A positive approach was taken in Guatemala (2017)

One of the first stages was drawing up a map of the strategic actors at national and local level to identify the main stakeholders to mobilize to obtain the support required during formulation and implementation.

However, associations representing the informal sector have very rarely been included in the NEP formulation process (Malawi,¹⁰² Mozambique and Namibia, 2016), while associations representing rural workers did not participate in any of the countries reviewed.

Recent employment policy processes are bringing together the development partners to build effective frameworks for coherent action

The latest employment policies have been an opportunity to involve the development partners. In almost all the countries reviewed, NEP formulation was supported by the ILO and, in a few cases, by other United Nations agencies, such as UNESCO in Madagascar or UNDP in Benin (2011) and Burundi (2014). In general, over the past 20 years, the development partners have become more aware of the need for global, integrated employment policies. International agendas, such as the SDGs, tend to involve more technical and financial partners on employment issues, including UNDP, the European Union, the World Bank and regional development banks, as well as numerous bilateral agencies, such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and non-governmental organizations. However, this resurgence of

⁹⁹ Otobe and Salgado (2015), pp. 39–42.

¹⁰⁰ Serrière (2016), p. 121; Bourdet (2014), p. 20; and Sijapati (2015), p. 23.

¹⁰¹ National Employment Policies: A guide for workers' organizations, International Labour Office, Geneva (2015)

¹⁰² In Namibia, the association of informal workers is at national level, while in Malawi, trade unions include the affiliates for informal workers.

interest in employment sometimes has its downside. It can result in employment programmes led by several agencies operating with different rules, making activities less coherent and effective and not making best use of existing resources.

Nevertheless, development partners are increasingly working alongside the ILO to provide effective frameworks for coherent action. In Mozambique (2016), North Macedonia (2015), Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Zambia (2019), Belize and Uruguay, for example, the ILO has collaborated with the World Bank. In Albania, the ILO worked with a group of employment donors. In Burkina Faso, the Republic of Moldova and Togo, the Office collaborated with UNDP to develop the policy documents. In Panama, the NEP was developed in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Development Bank of Latin America. In Cambodia, diagnostic analyses were performed jointly with the Asian Development Bank and UNDP, ensuring that the NEP process was aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now called the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) – the development framework for United Nations agencies at national level. In Fiji, the ILO undertook an employment diagnostic jointly with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which led to an ADB technical cooperation project on employment policies in the Pacific.¹⁰³ In the Philippines (2021), The ILO, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, with the overall support of the UN System through the UN Resident Coordinator, provided technical assistance to the labour market situation analysis and the consultations in the development of the National Employment Recovery Strategy (2021-2022).

In Mozambique (2016), the formulation process was launched at a national conference on employment. This conference, coordinated by the ILO, was the result of a collaboration between the International Labour Office, the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations and the World Bank. It was the first attempt to assemble all employment actors around the same table: national actors as well as United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations. It resulted in a concerted declaration and roadmap on employment to guide the formulation of the NEP.

Some recent NEP processes have thus united technical and financial partners around a collective vision of employment. This paves the way for them to work together to implement a coherent NEP – rather than having isolated and fragmented employment programmes run by a multitude of development partners.

Social dialogue around NEP design broadened in depth over the last twenty years

Communication around NEPs has evolved, making information more accessible to a wider audience

A critical component of participation is access to information. At the beginning of the NEP process, the government needs to inform stakeholders about its plans and the types of documents it wants to adopt. Throughout the process, everyone should then be able to see drafts, background analysis and reasoning.

Early NEP processes lacked openness, in that they did not provide stakeholders with enough information to make the process accessible and comprehensible. Poor provision of information often limited the value of the participative process. In the case of the 2005 NEP in Zambia, for example, it was found that 80 per cent of the officials from the Ministry of Labour interviewed either did not have a copy of the NEP or had never seen it; and half of them were unaware of the existing framework. Similar findings were made at provincial level, where around 60 per cent of officials interviewed were unaware of the NEP.¹⁰⁴

Recent NEPs have performed better – with more systematic information flows within the public administration, and to social partners and CSOs, with better dissemination of NEP-related documents, brochures and other materials.

¹⁰³ ILO/ADB diagnostic: <https://www.adb.org/publications/fiji-creating-quality-jobs-employment-diagnostic-study>, and Fiji NEP: <http://www.employment.gov.fj/images/National%20Employment%20Policy%20Booklet.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ NELMP situation analysis, 2015.

One problem is that employment diagnostic and policy documents tend to be long and daunting. These are comprehensive and often complex papers covering monetary and fiscal matters, financial and investment policies, rural and urban development, sectoral policies, international trade and governance. With ILO support, some ministries have therefore tried also to provide simple and clear versions for other line ministries, social partners, civil society and the general public. In Burkina Faso, Morocco and Tunisia for example, the ILO supported the production of more accessible versions of the national employment strategies. Similarly, Morocco, Mozambique (2016) and Tunisia produced thematic policy briefs to make the main ideas in technical diagnostic analyses available to a wider audience. Such initiatives on simplifying policies and studies should be further supported to enable line ministries, social partners, CSOs and the general public to engage more confidently in policy debates.

Some countries have also made effective use of information and communication technologies to extend information on employment policy to a wider range of stakeholders and the general public.

In Uruguay, for example, developments in the national dialogue on employment were shared on Facebook.¹⁰⁵ In other countries, the ILO supported the creation of portals and dedicated websites with all the documents on the consultation process along with webcasts. Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Peru and Tunisia have set up websites about the NEP process, with information on meetings and the resulting initiatives, allowing the general public not only to find out about the NEP, but also, in some cases, to contribute to the debate and post their comments and suggestions. Unfortunately, these websites are rarely updated. Publications online are valuable but may not reach a wide range of stakeholders. That is why some countries, such as Tunisia, have looked beyond a traditional communication approach, using the usual mass media and websites, to fuller communication strategies to promote visibility of the NEP and encourage everyone to take ownership of it. In the Philippines, the NEP design process included a virtual Job Summit (May 2021) which was made accessible to a broad public audience, including through livestreaming on social media, as well as providing sign language interpretation.

Communication around the NEP has thus evolved over the years, making NEP information and debates more inclusive and more accessible to a wider audience. Nevertheless, still more needs to be done in this area to make communication on the NEP easily digestible, targeted and timely to all parties involved. In particular, communication efforts still tend to focus on national institutions whereas action may also be needed at regional level.

Social dialogue is based on quantitative and qualitative analysis. The scope of and approaches to employment diagnostics has evolved over the years

Employment policies, as indicated above, seek to address key employment objectives through social dialogue as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis of the employment situation in the country based on existing data and studies. As a basis for social dialogue as well as policy design and prioritization, diagnostics are usually undertaken as first steps for an evidence-based NEP design to provide a common basis of understanding of a country specific landscape of employment and economic development.

The scope of employment policy diagnostic analyses has expanded over time. They are no longer the exclusive domain of the ministries responsible for employment. Earlier analyses tended to be limited to labour market data analysis and a review of programmes and interventions managed by ministries of employment, while more recent processes have produced more comprehensive studies reflecting a new, multidimensional and integrated vision of employment policies. The latest diagnostic analysis aims at identifying the constraints on and opportunities for enhancing inclusive job-rich growth as well as the issues that need to be addressed in order to enhance productive and decent employment.¹⁰⁶ As such, they cover all the different areas of intervention which have an impact on supply and/or demand for labour, as well as on the functioning of the labour market. Such comprehensive diagnostics have been undertaken in Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, among others (see Box 4-2).

¹⁰⁵ "Guide for the formulation of national employment policies", International Labour Office.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, the ILO diagnostics carried under the ILO-Sida partnership [country reports on Delivering on SDG8](#), the [ILO Rapid Assessments of the COVID-19 impacts on employment](#).

In many cases, specific studies are also undertaken to examine certain topics in greater depth. The number of studies and their scope vary significantly from country to country, depending on the needs, the priorities and the gaps to be addressed. This includes:

- **Macroeconomic policies and employment** – e.g. Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Malawi, Mozambique (2016), Namibia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Serbia, Tunisia North Macedonia
- **Employment and migration** – e.g. Cambodia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova
- **Gender and employment** – e.g. Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Tunisia
- **Growth and employment** – e.g. Mali, Sri Lanka, Uganda
- **Sectoral policies and employment** – e.g. El Salvador (2014), Mozambique (2016), Sri Lanka, Uganda, Tunisia
- **Skills and employability** – e.g. Cambodia, Mozambique
- **Rural employment** – e.g. Cambodia, Guatemala, Mozambique
- **The informal economy** – e.g. Costa Rica, Kenya, Namibia, Paraguay, El Salvador (2018), Tanzania
- **Public sector employment** – e.g. Sri Lanka

Data collection, assessment methods and modelling approaches also evolved over the years. In the context of the COVID crisis, for example, new data collection methods as well as analytical approaches have been developed to respond to the heightened uncertainty and the need for more and more rapid information. For example, high-frequency data and phone-based rapid labour force surveys have been carried out (e.g. in Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco and Tunisia). The ILO has also developed guidelines to undertake rapid assessments of the labour market.¹⁰⁷ On this basis, a range of assessments have been carried out in a number of countries (e.g. Argentina, Armenia, Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Portugal, Serbia and South Africa).¹⁰⁸

Recent formulation processes are based on a more active engagement of stakeholders

NEP design processes are based primarily on consultation. In this case, a technical team carries out a series of discussions with specific groups and then drafts the report. The technical team is usually tripartite and interministerial, and led by the ministry of employment. In Moldova (2016), for example, the drafting group was led by the Ministry of Labour and consisted of the social partners, the Ministries of Education, Finance, Economy and other sectoral ministries, as well as development partners and representatives of local authorities. The process was similar in Albania (2014), Azerbaijan (2018), Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Malawi, North Macedonia (2015), Panama, Rwanda (2018) and Zambia (2019).

Over the last few years, other countries have gone beyond consultation to establish more deliberative types of participation. With ILO support, from the earliest stages of the NEP processes, some governments have invited the most knowledgeable actors to work together, not just to discuss briefing documents but also help set the research agenda and then debating the options available for creating decent work.

It is also important to ensure active engagement of stakeholders throughout the process. In early NEP processes, consultations were usually held only late in the process. Indeed NEPs often only brought in stakeholders at the end to validate the NEP document in a tripartite meeting. Often, expert consultants have held a 'monopoly' of expertise. In more recent NEP processes, ILO support has been aimed at stimulating a debate over the entire lifecycle, from initial diagnosis to final validation.

¹⁰⁷ See [ILO. 2020. Technical brief: Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market - Guidelines](https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/areas/covid/lang--en/index.htm) - On this basis rapid assessments have been undertaken in various countries. For more details, see <https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/areas/covid/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁰⁸ https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/policy-briefs/WCMS_743644/lang--en/index.htm and https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/Whatsnew/WCMS_754961/lang--en/index.htm

This has typically been done in a series of workshops lasting over several days – as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Honduras, Indonesia, Malawi, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal and Tunisia.¹⁰⁹ Based on a background study, the diagnostic analysis in these countries was carried out by the actors concerned. In the workshops, the participants jointly identified the core problems and root causes so that subsequent analysis was based on stakeholders' knowledge. In this context, the diagnostic analysis no longer represents a purely technical academic exercise and is not just about producing an additional study. Experience shows that stakeholder participation in a more interactive context allows sharing of broader perspectives. It also helps in reaching a consensus on the core problems and challenges, as well as building the capacities of stakeholders in the field of employment and, not least, social dialogue (see Box 4.2).

► **Box 4-2: Indonesia - national stakeholders undertake the diagnostic analysis (2011)**

In Indonesia, diagnostic analyses on employment were performed in four provinces through workshops attended by social partners, research institutes, ministerial departments and the regional authorities.

The diagnostic analyses were performed in two phases. The first involved a quantitative analysis of the employment situation based on existing data and studies. Next, on this basis and using an interactive methodology developed by the ILO (the employment “decision tree”), the participants identified the main causes and effects of decent employment deficits in their region. This joint analysis then served as a basis for identifying employment priorities.

Source: Employment diagnostic analysis: Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia, ILO, 2011.

In some countries, this process has also been used to arrive at policy measures – creating a sense of legitimacy and shared ownership of the future NEP. In such cases, governments have organized national dialogues with thematic meetings. Held over a period of months, they involve different actors depending on the topic. Uruguay, for example, set up five thematic working groups in which the participants debated the various proposals until they reached an agreement. At the end of each month, these agreements were presented at a conference and shared with the public through the press and a website and Facebook page.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Morocco set up five thematic workshops on macroeconomic and sectoral policies, human capital development, labour market governance, NEP implementation, and regionalization of the NEP. These workshops established the strategic orientations and proposed operational responses to the main employment problems. Similar dialogues were organized in other countries, including Cambodia, Chad, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. Sri Lanka, for example, had ten thematic groups with 67 members from government, academia, workers' organizations, employers' organizations and CSOs. These groups reinvigorated several collaboration paths and created new ones.

Thematic groups have typically been organized around various policy priorities: macro-economic and sectoral/industrial policies; skills and employability; private sector development; and labour market governance. They have therefore been looking beyond the traditional tripartite agenda –wages, pension reform or labour law – and have also served as platforms for discussing wider socio-economic issues, thereby adding new dimensions to social dialogue. Such policy forums can also participate in making social dialogue more inclusive and bring in those in non-standard forms of employment, SMEs, informal workers, migrants and other vulnerable groups. In Guatemala (2017), for example, dialogues were organized, not by theme but by 'stakeholders' group' – academia, women's organizations, youth associations, mayors, the Economic and Social Council, the Tripartite Committee on International Labour Affairs, and indigenous authorities.

The range of methods to involve stakeholders and enable them to express their views has been extended over the years

The methods and forums of participation will depend on the objectives and stages of the processes, the available time and resources, the stakeholders participating, and at what level – political or technical. Various tools and different combinations of methods have been used to engage with stakeholders at different points

¹⁰⁹ See http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_177130.pdf

¹¹⁰ International Labour Office (2012), p. 121.

in recent NEP processes – allowing governments to reach stakeholders in several ways and offering more information on which decisions can be based. Table 4-2 presents some examples of platforms and committees established to engage stakeholders in NEP design. It shows how, in certain countries, NEP committees are being set up at different levels (political, senior and technical staff) to promote the involvement of these “layers” of staff in the design of employment policies.

In addition to formal forums, there have also been iterative consultations carried out through a range of formal and informal methods – working groups, circulation for comments, bilateral discussions, interviews, questionnaires and workshops, in order to gather a wide range of opinions. Morocco, for example, had NEP steering and technical committees (both tripartite and interministerial), and also a series of thematic groups for stakeholders. In addition, each stakeholder received a questionnaire through which they could identify existing measures and policies within their responsibility that would support the strategic objectives of the NEP. They could also identify known benefits, harms and costs of current policies and their impact on employment. Consultations and political advocacy also included all forms of discretionary, ad hoc, and informal contacts – from phone calls to letters, informal meetings and circulation for comments to the collection of information and views from interested parties.

The design of the National Employment Recovery Strategy in the Philippines (2021) was piloted by an Inter-Agency Task Force. It was also based on a series of consultations which included the use of information and communication technologies (e.g., video conferencing platforms, virtual breakout groups, live polling tools, comment function) to ensure broad-based participation (see box 4.3). The COVID context is making it more important than ever to develop new ways of engaging remotely with stakeholders and the public, and developing new tools to facilitate online consultations and e-participation. In this context, further efforts are needed to develop innovative public policy design, including through smart and efficient use of information and communication technologies.

► **Box 4-3: National Employment Recovery Strategy (2021-2022) of the Philippines – a whole-of-society approach**

In response to the massive disruption to the economy and labour market in the Philippines due to the COVID-19 crisis (ILO, 2020a; DOLE, 2020) the Philippine Government adopted a **whole-of-society approach** to developing the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) under the updated Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and ReCharge PH. The strategic framework of the NERS 2021-2022 is anchored in the ILO's four-pillar policy framework for responding to the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis (ILO, 2020b), while the four outcomes of the NERS operational framework focus on (1) restarting the economy, (2) restoring consumer and business confidence, (3) upgrading and retooling the workforce, and (4) facilitating labour market access.

- **Whole-of-government and inter-agency collaboration:** The Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001-2021 signed in February 2021 constituted the Inter-Agency Task Force to develop, implement and monitor the National Employment Recovery Strategy and the NERS Action Plan. The Inter-Agency Task Force is composed of 20 government entities, chaired by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and co-chaired by the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The DOLE serves as the NERS Secretariat and an Oversight Committee includes the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, Department of Finance, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and Department of Budget and Management. The ILO, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, with the [overall support of the UN System through the UN Resident Coordinator](#), provided technical assistance to the labour market situation analysis and the consultations in the development of the NERS.
- **National dialogues:** Recognizing the importance of social dialogue in the development and implementation of the government's recovery plan, the NERS was developed through three levels of dialogue: (1) sectoral consultations; (2) pre-summit dialogues with workers and employers; and (3) a Job Summit. In April 2021, a series of virtual sectoral focus group discussions for businesses (manufacturing; IT-BPM; wholesale and retail; tourism; banking and finance; construction; transport and logistics; agriculture; education; and health) and workers (formal sector, public sector, informal, migrant, women, youth, education, and platform workers) were held with more than 500 employers' and workers' groups and more than 2,000 participants. Building on the economic and labour market situation analysis provided by the DOLE, NEDA, ILO, ADB and the World Bank, the sectoral consultations provided an opportunity to gather employers' and workers' perspectives on key challenges and recommended policy responses. The use of information and communication technologies (e.g., video conferencing platforms, virtual breakout groups, live polling tools, comment function) proved effective for government host agencies, resource persons, facilitators and rapporteurs to facilitate an inclusive dialogue. The pre-summit dialogues for business and workers provided a platform to present, discuss and validate the consolidated issues, concerns and policy and programme interventions gathered during the respective sectoral consultations, structured by short-, medium- and long-term priorities across the four NERS outcomes. Further efforts to make the virtual Job Summit accessible to a broad public audience included livestreaming on social media and providing sign language interpretation.
- **Institutionalization:** The NERS was adopted during the virtual Job Summit on Labour Day (1 May 2021) organized by the Task Group on Economic Recovery (TGER) and the NERS Task Force. The NERS Chairperson presented the concrete policies and programmes under the NERS 8-Point Employment Recovery Agenda 2021-2022, with budget allocations and expected number of beneficiaries. Business and workers' representatives expressed their strong commitment and constant cooperation to realizing the NERS outcomes, and presented the **labour sector agenda and business sector agenda towards employment recovery**, highlighting the short-term policy and programme recommendations in the four NERS outcome areas. The labour and business sector agendas are based on the joint aspiration to achieve employment recovery through inclusive and sustainable economic growth based on the principles of social justice, full employment, and decent work. The President of the Philippines concluded the Job Summit in his keynote address. An Executive Order will institutionalize the NERS Task Force and its implementation of the 8-Point Employment Recovery Agenda 2021-2022.

Source: ILO (2020a) COVID-19 labour market impact in the Philippines: Assessment and national policy responses; dole (2020) jobsfit COVID-19 labour market information report: how the pandemic is reshaping the Philippine labour market; ILO (2020b) A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis; Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001-2021: Constituting the Inter-Agency Task Force on the National Employment Recovery Strategy

Forging new partnerships has facilitated political and technical buy-in

In some countries, the NEP process has created new strategic partnerships. These have helped to anchor research on employment in wider research on economic development, growth strategies and poverty

reduction.¹¹¹ Such partnerships have also facilitated political and technical buy-in to future employment policy.

In some countries, forging alliances, including with those who have a successful track record influencing national policies, not only helped ensure that research efforts across governmental and academic structures are complementary, but also proved useful in securing the engagement of key actors for employment.

In Mali, for example, the Ministry of Employment collaborated with the Strategic Unit for Growth and Poverty Reduction to perform a study on the links between growth, employment and poverty.¹¹² This collaboration facilitated interministerial dialogue on employment and allowed this dimension to be integrated into the national development plan. In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Employment worked with the Ministry of Economy and Finance on a study examining the coherence of the draft NEP with the national development plan. As a result, the Ministry of Economy and Finance helped promote discussion of employment, notably in terms of budgetary issues and subsequent implementation. In Morocco, the Ministry of Employment worked with the High Commission for Planning and the Ministry of Finance to draw up forecasts and costed objectives. In addition, some countries have carried out joint research and diagnostic studies with research institutions and think tanks or relevant departments in planning or sectoral ministries. In Mozambique (2016), the Government recruited a university team to support the NEP drafting and consultative process. In many countries, these research outcomes then formed the background to identifying employment solutions. These partnerships also strengthened the legitimacy of diagnostic studies and opened up new ways of working together.

Building sustained political support for the NEP at all levels of government is a key element in supporting policy changes

Last but not least, to ensure buy-in from government officials, the NEP requires political advocacy – in the form of briefing notes, facts, media and messaging, as well as creating relationships. A good illustration is Costa Rica, where the Ministry of Labour lobbied other relevant ministries, notably the Ministries of Economy, Agriculture, Tourism and Social Affairs, as well as the Economic Council. The orientations of the NEP were presented to the Economic Presidential Council, then to the Governing Council, which decided to “position the employment policy as a strategic objective of the State of Costa Rica aiming to combat poverty and inequality”.¹¹³ This ensured recognition of the cross-cutting nature of employment, as well as the need to shift away from a social approach to an economic one. In other countries, at key moments, presidential support has been mobilized to ensure the involvement of all actors. In Ghana, Guatemala and Mozambique, for example, this happened during the launch of the NEP formulation and validation process. In Mozambique (2016), the NEP formulation process started with a presidential summit discussing a series of evidence-based reports – which helped secure stakeholders’ engagement throughout the process and forge a common approach to employment policy. In Guatemala (2017), the National Commission for Decent Employment (composed of the Ministries of Economy, Education, Social Development and Planning) was created by the Ministry of Labour with presidential support. In Namibia and Malawi, the ministries of labour worked in close collaboration with the Offices of the President throughout the formulation process. In Uganda, the situation analysis that was completed in 2018 to assess the deficit of decent job creation was launched by the President during the Labour Day celebrations on 1 May 2019, to give highest level visibility to the findings of the report that pointed to the need for coordinated and comprehensive approaches to employment creation.

In other cases, the support of the head of the government was enlisted to start the formulation process or launch the NEP – e.g. Albania, Cambodia and Tunisia. Other ways of mobilizing political engagement included integrating employment as a priority in national development plans or in key reference frameworks of the constitution – as in Guatemala, Nepal or Tunisia. In Tunisia, the Social Contract (2013) and the Declaration

¹¹¹ ILO “Guide on national employment policies”, Geneva, 2012

¹¹² *Croissance, emploi et politiques pour l'emploi au Mali*, International Labour Office (2012).

¹¹³ *Sistematización y análisis del proceso de implementación de la Estrategia Nacional de Empleo y Desarrollo Productivo de Costa Rica*, ILO (2017), to be published.

on Employment (2016) were signed by the highest representatives of the tripartite partners.¹¹⁴ This established a solid political basis for the NEP formulation process and a common point of reference for diverging views. In Guatemala (2017), the Government's development plan had identified the employment policy as a priority which meant that the Ministry of Labour had presidential support. In the Balkan countries, the EU accession negotiations included a chapter on employment, motivating governments to take actions in favour of an employment policy.

Some countries are opening up opportunities for citizens' voices, especially those of youth

In a few cases, the NEP processes have also included citizens' voices and feedback to ensure that the NEP addresses the real needs of populations. In Tunisia, 'quick' youth and enterprise surveys have been carried out to better understand the problems and aspirations of young people and enterprises. In addition, youth representatives were invited to join some NEP discussions, including those identifying the vision and strategic objectives of the NEP. In Malawi, separate meetings were organized with young people at regional level to identify priority areas and strategies. In China, national and local governments organized interviews with jobseekers to discuss the NEP. Other countries have used information and communication technologies to extend consultations to the general public. In Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova (2016) this was done through online forums.

However, such initiatives are still rare and there is little evidence that they are feeding into NEP decision-making processes. More needs to be done to enable direct beneficiaries to have a voice in the NEP – through user-friendly consultation, websites, social media, and mobile technology. But 'face-to-face' methodologies may also be needed to avoid missing out some parts of the population. In order to encourage people to engage, governments must adapt their activities, language and style to citizens' needs, while making interactions attractive and easy to understand.

The legitimacy and ownership of employment policies are increasingly reinforced at sub-national levels as well

Lower levels of government can respond to local employment needs in rapid, targeted, effective and appropriate ways. In some countries, this has been achieved by having regional representatives participate in national workshops – e.g. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe. Other countries, e.g. Argentina and Indonesia, have held regional consultations for diagnostic analysis to feed into the NEP.

In the Republic of Moldova, seven of the ten consultations to debate the NES measures were held at regional level. This offered a platform for negotiations and tripartite consultations between public authorities and social partners at lower levels of government. In Albania, three regional round tables were organized, uniting all the country's districts. In Guatemala (2017), the consultation phase was coordinated with the National Urban and Rural Development Council in order to establish a dialogue strategy at national level and in the eight regions, at both the formulation and validation stages.

Regional consultations have also been organized in Mozambique, Sri Lanka,¹¹⁵ (2016), Zambia (2019), Azerbaijan, China, Kyrgyzstan and South Korea. Recent NEP processes relied more on regional and local consultations. Globally, sub-national consultations, both at regional/provincial and local level, increased over the years (see Table 4-2).

Box 4-4: Article 15 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on employment envisages the creation of local employment coordination committees which consist of equal number of representatives of trade unions, employers' associations, relevant state agencies, local government bodies and associations representing the interests of people in special need of social protection, in order to make coordinated decisions in the field of employment.

¹¹⁴ This Declaration outlines eleven principles to guide further action on employment, including the need to adopt a comprehensive employment strategy covering all aspects of job creation. It was signed by the Tunisian Prime Minister, the heads of workers' and employers' organizations (UGTT and UTICA), and in the presence of the UN Secretary General and the ILO Director General.

¹¹⁵ Otobe and Salgado (2015), p. 28.

In addition, in some cases, as in Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso,¹¹⁶ Madagascar and Morocco, sub-national or provincial action plans were developed after adoption of the NEP. In Argentina in 2018, for example, the ILO supported the preparation of a comparative study on employment policies, including active labour market policies, in all provinces of Argentina. This was presented to the employment and skills working group of the Federal Labour Council as a basis for formulating provincial decent work plans. In Iraq, the ILO supported the Kurdistan Region to develop its own employment policy in line with the Iraq NEP. In Morocco in 2017, the ILO supported the development of territorial policies in three pilot regions – Rabat-Salé- Kénitra, Tangier-Tétouan, Al Hoceima and Souss-Massa. In workshops held over several months, the participants identified the problems and the policy measures together, thus offering a platform for regional negotiations and tripartite consultations between public authorities and social partners. These regional plans bring new solutions for specific regional employment issues, while also being in line with the wider national employment strategy. They also help address the issue of regional disparities which are particularly pressing in Morocco. This approach is now being replicated in the other regions of Morocco.

► **Box 4-5: Serbia, a case of territorialization of the national employment strategy**

Serbia's National Employment Strategy has built on a process of territorializing of services. The Ministry in charge of Employment has led the design and implementation of the overall strategy as well as national legislation. While this process of territorialization has been slow (starting in 2010), it has currently shown its ability to deploy better its programmes, and achieve the policy goals contained in the Strategy.

To better track its implementation, the overall national strategy is reflected in operational action plans designed on a yearly basis, representing a consolidated overview of employment policy goals. It includes active labour market policies, as well as activities undertaken in line with policies and reforms dealing with employment in terms of economic sectors, education, youth, and social inclusion. As a more granular example, the National Employment Service (NES) designs yearly employment operational plan, indicating which programmes, including any changes in their parameters, delivery modalities or eligibilities, that will be carried out in a given year. These include job search, counselling, training, public works, as well as unemployment benefits. The overall general distribution of resources and programmes is based on the availability of local yearly employment action plans, and their past performance. At local level, municipalities are responsible for implementing employment action plans through active and passive labour market measures, as well as creating environments conducive to job creation, human development, social inclusion and community development. This yearly plan is designed via local employment councils (LECs). The law on these councils indicates that they should be constituted by the local government, employers' and workers' organizations, NES and other employment agencies, associations relevant to employment or to the inclusion of certain categories of persons prone to unemployment (persons with disabilities, national minorities, veterans, women, and young people). The LECs identify the most needed and viable combination of measures according to local needs and possibilities. These must be in alignment with the overall strategic pillars and outcomes agreed under the employment strategy, as well as particularities, possibilities within their territory. On active labour market measures specifically, they decide the combination of programmes they need and in which quantities, so that the local offices of the NES can budget the adequate combination.

Source: Mauricio Dierckxsens, ILO Strategies Unit.

NEP. In Morocco in 2017, the ILO supported the development of territorial policies in three pilot regions – Rabat-Salé- Kénitra, Tangier-Tétouan, Al Hoceima and Souss-Massa. In workshops held over several months, the participants identified the problems and the policy measures together, thus offering a platform for regional negotiations and tripartite consultations between public authorities and social partners. These regional plans bring new solutions for specific regional employment issues, while also being in line with the wider national employment strategy. They also help address the issue of regional disparities which are particularly pressing in Morocco. This approach is now being replicated in the other regions of Morocco.

Bringing everyone together and creating new coordination paths

Assembling all NEP partners for continuous coordination throughout the planning process is crucial, but does not happen naturally. Opening things up to a larger number of stakeholders makes coordination more

¹¹⁶ Bourdet (2014), p. 21.

complicated and means there are more conflicting views and inputs to consider. To coordinate the NEP design process and secure stakeholder engagement, the ILO supported the creation of employment committees in addition to informal consultations and drafting groups. In practice, these coordination mechanisms vary (Table 4.2).

Sometimes it was possible to use existing structures. In Mali, for example, the Government used the tripartite interministerial committee that had been created following the 2004 Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou. Similarly in 2009, Liberia used the Interministerial Steering Committee on Labour and Employment that had been set up during the formulation of the poverty reduction strategy.¹¹⁷ Taking advantage of existing structures has the merit of being quicker and of capitalizing on current ways of working – as well as avoiding proliferation and overlap in the number of structures. However, many countries lack such bodies. They might have tripartite social dialogue mechanisms such as labour advisory boards or national social dialogue councils, but these are not always suitable for coordinating the NEP process. This is partly because of their composition, since they generally do not include finance, planning or sectoral ministries, or the central bank, or other key actors such as CSOs. There is also a question of status, since they are only advisory; their task is to pass on opinions rather than make decisions.

In the absence of appropriate or effective tripartite and interministerial structures, many countries have set up ad hoc committees for NEP design – as seen in Cambodia, Chad, China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Iraq, the Republic of Korea, Malawi, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, Panama, Sierra Leone and Tunisia.

The NEP processes in these and other countries have demonstrated two important requirements: they should be tripartite and interministerial, and operate at high levels of government.

Ensure committees are tripartite and interministerial

The coordinating committees need to be tripartite but also interministerial – bringing on board new actors that were not present in traditional tripartite structures nor previously associated with decisions on employment – such as ministries of finance, and other sectorial ministries, as well as CSOs and development partners (see Table 4-2). This ensures that the policymaking process incorporates different perspectives. Sri Lanka, for example, set up a national steering committee with the participation of seven ministries,¹¹⁸ the Central Bank, the employers' organization, chambers of commerce, three workers' organizations and a research institute. Morocco set up a steering committee, chaired by the Minister of Employment and including the Secretaries-General of the ministries concerned, the Presidency of the Government and social partners.¹¹⁹

Committees should be supported by high levels of government to ensure strong political backing on employment issues

Second, the committees need high-level representation to raise the profile of the NEP, facilitating cooperation across traditionally distant structures that may have different logics, priorities and views. In early employment policy processes, the committees were 'naturally' chaired by employment ministries. Experience has shown, however, that these do not always have the legitimacy to maintain the cross-cutting linkages and engage actors across the board. In that regard, there have been some interesting initiatives. Some countries decided to have the interministerial committee chaired by the most senior representative to guarantee multisectoral action on employment– e.g. the prime minister, as in Tunisia, or under the aegis of

¹¹⁷ This Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Labour, and its members notably include the social partners; the Ministries of Planning, Youth and Sports, and Public Works; the ILO; the World Bank and the UNDP. See the "Guide for the formulation of national employment policies", International Labour Office, Geneva (2012).

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Human Resources; Ministry of Finance and Planning; Ministry of Economic Development; Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations; Ministry of Productivity Promotion; Ministry of Foreign Employment; Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development.

¹¹⁹ The CTT succeeded the National Advisory Committee (CNN) in charge of following up the diagnostic analysis. The two committees had the same members. For more information about the institutional framework for formulating an employment strategy in Morocco, see Serrière (2016), pp. 53–60.

the president, as in the Republic of Korea.¹²⁰ In Panama, the President himself set up the High Committee for Employment Policy and gave it the task of formulating an NEP. Elsewhere, the committees were chaired by the ministry responsible for employment, but with the support of higher authorities or cross-cutting ministries such as economy or finance. In Chad, the preparatory committee was chaired by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economy and Urban Planning, alongside the Ministry responsible for employment. In Sri Lanka, the steering committee was chaired by the Minister of Human Resources, with the Ministers of Productivity Promotion and Labour acting as vice-chairpersons. In the Philippines, the NEP Inter-Agency Task Force, composed of 20 government entities, was chaired by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and co-chaired by the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

► **Box 4-6: Comprehensive policy formulation in Sri Lanka**

In 2012, with the technical and financial support of the ILO, Sri Lanka formulated and adopted its National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP). The overall process took more than three years, and included:

Initial capacity-building – Capacity-building preparatory workshops were held with the participation of national stakeholders on key issues related to employment promotion and human resources development.

Institution-building – A proper national institutional framework was needed for the policy formulation stage, together with a high level of political commitment. In this regard, Sri Lanka demonstrated the kind of institutions that could be used throughout the whole NEP formulation process:

- Direct technical and financial support from the ILO;
- A permanent structure (the Senior Ministers Secretariat) to coordinate activities with key ministries related to education, vocational training, social development, health, sports, and women's and children's rights;
- A high-level, ad hoc and time-bound committee, the National Steering Committee, to steer and guide the formulation process;
- Several thematic working groups to identify key employment challenges and to formulate policy recommendations for a framework document.

Extensive consultation – Consultations were held throughout the whole formulation process at all levels (national, regional, and local), with comprehensive political buy-in by all the key stakeholders. Several technical workshops used research presented by the thematic working groups and provided comments and inputs to thematic areas of the NHREP.

Political commitment – Comprehensive representation of national, regional and local stakeholders created an inclusive process. In turn, high political commitment guaranteed effective coordination, as well as political buy-in and the accountable support needed to successfully design the NHREP.

Source: Formulation of the National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka, ILO, 2015.

Keeping all members of organizations engaged and informed

The experience shows that such committees are an important resource for employment ministries as they can support lobbying and advocacy work within the rest of the government, as well as in relation to other employment partners. But some limitations remain: typically, they only have a single representative from each organization, so the organization as a whole may be neither fully engaged nor prepared to take on the tasks identified during the meetings. This can happen even within ministries of employment where other departments or regional levels are not aware of, or participating, in the NEP process.

To address this issue, some stakeholders have organized discussions with their affiliates to inform them about the NEP process, gather their views and establish a common position. In Mongolia in 2011, the trade union confederation played an important part. It trained its executives on the key concepts of decent work and prepared a document outlining its position on employment policy. To gather the recommendations and opinions of its members and ensure that the study was participative, the confederation organized meetings in the country's four provinces. The final version of the summary document was drawn up during a national

¹²⁰ In addition to being placed under the authority of the President, the Republic of Korea's National Employment Strategy Meeting is composed of high-level members, such as the National Economic Advisory Team and the Presidential Policy Coordinator.

consultation meeting, with the participation of 40 representatives from 13 provincial federations and 25 industrial federations.¹²¹ This is an important model that could be replicated in other countries to ensure that there is two-way information and feedback between the representatives and their institutions.

Engaging influential bodies such as national labour consultative committees or economic and social councils is key

The review shows significant recourse to national labour consultative committees or economic and social councils which, in many countries, have a potentially important role. These structures have a consultative function and generally issue opinions and provide formal recommendations on economic and social policies before they go to parliament. Their reports are usually available to the public and can raise awareness about employment issues. Given their importance, their opinions have been sought in various countries – e.g. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Guatemala, South Korea, Panama, Peru and many countries in the Balkans where working groups collected and structured contributions from all relevant stakeholders (also see Table 4-2). In North Macedonia, the final draft of the NEP was then submitted to the Economic and Social Council, and in Albania it went to the National Labour Council, the highest consultative social dialogue bodies at national level, with representatives from the Council of Ministers and social partners. Similarly, in South Africa, the NEP currently under formulation will have to be approved by the powerful tripartite structure – the National Economic Development and the Labour Council (NEDLAC).

The pillars for the promotion of employment can be classified as interministerial committees which can make decisions, and councils which are advisory. Ideally the process should involve both. As the main actors in tripartite councils, the social partners can play a key role, while they are one stakeholder amongst many others in interministerial committees. Social dialogue committees provide them an important opportunity to raise their concerns and priorities before the final adoption of the NEP. Table 4-2 provides some examples of the various institutional set-ups that countries have been using or establishing to secure stakeholder engagement in the design of the NEP. As mentioned above, it has in many cases been complemented by other tools, such as iterative consultations, political advocacy, strategic partnerships and the social media. Experience shows that a variety of methods is needed, as one tool is generally not enough to create the necessary level of participation by different stakeholders.

¹²¹ See “National Employment Policies: A guide for workers’ organizations”, International Labour Office, Geneva (2015).

► 4.2 Modalities of stakeholder engagement in NEP formulation processes

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Albania (2014)		The Ministry of Social welfare and Youth led the process, in coordination with institutes and agencies with responsibilities for labour markets and TVET. The full Council of Ministers reviewed the NESS before its approval and budgeting.	The Albania National Labour Council was a key forum for discussion of the upcoming NESS and approval of each of its components. Furthermore, an expanded review was carried out, including institutes such as the Social Insurance Institute, State Social Services, National Employment Service, State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications and the National Youth Service.	Sector Working Group on Vocational Skills Development and Employment and technical coordination group.	The Albania National Labour Council held recurrent sessions on the design and implementation of the NESS.
Azerbaijan (2018)			Working group on preparing the National Employment Strategy chaired by the Ministry of Labour and composed of the social partners; development partners; the Ministries of Education, Finance and Economy; sectoral ministries and representatives of local authorities, Academy of Sciences.		National Tripartite Commission on Economic and Social Affairs.
Cameroon (2017)		Interministerial steering committee chaired by the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Planning. It included the social partners as well as the Ministries of Finance, Youth, Agriculture, Environment, Forestry, Industry, Finance, Forestry, Economy, Fishery, Agriculture, Environment, Industry, Labour and Social Affairs, higher education, the National Institute of statistics, the National Employment Funds as well as ILO and UNDP.	Tripartite Technical Committee on Employment chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Employment with the participation of the social partners and directors of studies and planning of the Ministries of Finance, Youth, Agriculture, Environment, Forestry, Industry, Economy, Fishery, Labour and Social Affairs, higher education, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Employment Funds as well as ILO and UNDP. Technical drafting team involving the Ministry of employment, social partners plus several other key stakeholder organizations.	3 thematic groups on the diagnostic of the labour market, formulation of strategic guidelines, preparation of the monitoring-assessment framework.	

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
China (2020)	State Council	<p>Interministerial Committee chaired by the Vice-Premier of the State Council. In 2020, the Committee includes the National Development and Reform Commission, the State Council, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, the National Tobacco Bureau, the National Administration of the Post Office, Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council, the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission, the National Defence Mobilization Department of the Central Military Commission, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Central Committee of Youth League, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, the All-China Women's Federation, the People's Bank of China, the General Administration of Taxation, the Market Supervision General Administration, the Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, and the following ministries: (i) Industry and Information Technology; (ii) Transportation, National Health Commission; (iii) Finance; (iv) Human Resources and Social Security; (v) Housing and Urban-Rural Development; (vi) Water Resources; (v) Ecology and Environment; (vi) Commerce; (vii) Natural Resources, (viii) Public Security; (ix) Agriculture and Rural Affairs; (x) Education, Ministry of Civil Affairs; and (xi) Veterans</p>	<p>The Technical Committee is chaired by the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. It includes the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of China, the General Administration of Taxation, and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions.</p>	<p>The working groups are as follows:</p> <p>(1) Employment for University Graduates; and (2) Employment for Rural-Urban Migrant Workers.</p> <p>These two working groups are chaired by the Vice-Premier of the State Council, and have technical offices in the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. The first is under the interministerial committee for employment. The second is independent.</p>	

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Guatemala (2017)		National Commission for Decent Work (CONED), chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Protection, and composed of the Ministers of Economy, Education and Social Development.	Inter-institutional Technical Table (MTI). Composed by the Vice-Ministers of Labour and Social Protection, Economy, Education and Social Development; employers' and workers' representatives.	Sectoral dialogues on: (i) Research academies and institutes; (ii) Women's organizations; (iii) Youth organizations; (iv) Mayors; and (v) Indigenous peoples. Consultations at national level: Workers' representatives and employers' representatives. Consultation at regional level: Local governments, civil society organizations, youth, women and indigenous representatives.	Tripartite National Commission on Labour Relations and Freedom of Association.

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) (2018)		<p>In 2014, a High-level Tripartite Interministerial Committee for Employment was created and established by decree. The Committee was chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and consisted of representatives of the following ministries: (i) Planning; (ii) Labour and Social Affairs; (iii) Finance and Economy; (iv) Higher Education and Scientific Research; (v) Interior; (vi) Education; (vii) Electricity; (viii) Construction and Housing; (ix) Municipalities and Tourism; (x) Culture and Youth; (xi) Natural Resources; (xii) Trade and Industry; (xiii) Agriculture and Water Resources; as well as the Kurdistan Board of Investment, the Erbil Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Kurdish Trade Union Federation, The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs, and the Human Rights Commission.</p>	<p>A technical team of focal points was set up in May 2015, composed of the following ministries : (i) Planning; (ii) Labour and Social Affairs, (iii) Finance and Economy, (iv) Higher Education and Scientific Research, (v) Interior, (vi) Education, (vii) Electricity, (viii) Construction and Housing, (ix) Municipalities and Tourism, (x) Culture and Youth, (xi) Natural Resources; (xii) Trade and Industry, (xiii) Agriculture and Water Resources; as well as the Kurdistan Board of Investment, the Erbil Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Kurdish Trade Union Federation, The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs, and the Human Rights Commission.</p> <p>The employment policy was drafted by a task force comprising the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, employers' and workers' representatives and university academics.</p>	<p>Various working groups, consultations and capacity-building workshops have been organized to prioritize policy interventions and develop an action plan for implementation.</p>	
Namibia (2013)		<p>Tripartite Interministerial Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Social Welfare, including the social partners, Ministries of Youth, Finance, Works and Transport, Land, Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Trade and Industry.</p>	<p>Tripartite-plus Interministerial Technical Committee Chaired by the Director of the Labour Market Services Directorate comprising the social partners (NEF, TUCNA, NANTU), NISO, NSA, LaRRI, Namibia Manufacturing Association, NCCI, Development Bank of Namibia, Social Security Commission, Namibia Training Authority, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare.</p>	<p>Working groups – ad hoc on specific topics.</p>	<p>Labour Advisory Council (LAC).</p>

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
North Macedonia (2015)			A tripartite working group chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was established, including representatives of several ministries/agencies: Ministry of Education and Science; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs; Ministry of Finance; Employment Service Agency; Ministry for support of Entrepreneurship; State Labour Inspectorate, VET Centre), workers' and employers' organization and three international organizations (ILO, World Bank and UNDP).		The final draft of the NES was presented to the Economic and Social Council for endorsement, before being submitted to the Government.
Occupied Palestinian Territory (2020)		A tripartite interministerial committee, under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and hosted by the Cabinet Office was established to develop the National Employment Strategy in the OPT. The members included representatives of the following ministries: (i) Labour, (ii) General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, (iii) Higher Education and Scientific Research, (iv) Education, (v) Industry, (vi) Social Development, (vii) Women's Affairs, (viii) Entrepreneurship and Empowerment, (ix) Economy, (x) Public Works and Housing, (xii) Tourism and Antiquities and (xii) Agriculture, as well as the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.		Various sectoral workshops were conducted to identify policy priorities by sector.	

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Sri Lanka (2012)	Senior Ministers' Secretariat composed of the ten Ministers with priority portfolios for the achievement of national priorities.	Seven ministries: Ministry of Human Resources; Ministry of Finance and Planning; Ministry of Economic Development; Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations; Ministry of Productivity Promotion; Ministry of Foreign Employment; Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, along with the Central Bank, the employers' organization, chambers of commerce, trade union organizations (three in total) and a research institute.	Drafting committee composed of the Ministry of Human Resources, academics as well as employment and labour specialists.	The following ad-hoc working groups were established: (i) Macroeconomic policies for employment generation; (ii) Sectoral policies for employment creation; (iii) SMEs and the informal sector; (iv) Human resources development and productivity; (v) Development of skills and employability; (vi) Labour market policies and target groups; (vii) Labour market institutions and labour relations; (viii) Employment services; (ix) Foreign employment; and (x) Public sector employment.	
Tunisia (to be adopted)	Political committee: chaired by the Head of the Government and composed of the directors of the UGTT (trade union) and the UTICA (employers) and all Ministers.	Steering committee chaired by the Minister of Vocational Training and Employment and composed of the social partners and seven Ministers (Social Affairs, Economy, Finance, Industry, Agriculture, Higher Education, and Tourism).	Technical committee: chaired by the Employment Department of Vocational Training and Employment Ministry and composed of the social partners as well as the Ministries of Employment, Finance, Social Affairs; Economy; Industry; Agriculture; Higher Education, and Tourism.	Four ad-hoc working groups were set up: (i) Macroeconomic and sectoral policies; (ii) Human capital development; (iii) Labour market governance; and (iv) NEP implementation.	

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Republic of Korea (2020)	Jobs Committee, under the responsibility of the President. It includes the Ministers of the Government (11), the Presidential Advisor for Jobs, heads of trade unions (3) employers' organization (3) research institutes such as Korea Development Institute, Korea Labour Institute, Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training and those with expertise and experience in employment policy.	Employment Policy Deliberative Council (permanent) chaired by the Minister of Employment and Labour. It consists of the Vice-Ministers of related ministries (Strategy and Finance / Education / Science and ICT / Interior and Safety / Trade, Industry and Energy / Health and Welfare / Gender Equality and Family / Land and Infrastructure / SMEs and Start-ups) and those commissioned by the Minister of Employment and Labour among, representatives of workers and business owners(usually deputy level), persons recommended by the Nationwide Consultative Council of Mayors, and those with knowledge and experience of employment issues.		<p>There are 9 thematic groups under the JOBS Committee on public jobs, private jobs, social economies, healthcare, women, youth, construction industry, job creation financing, workplace innovation.</p> <p>There are 6 thematic groups under the Employment Policy Deliberative Council on PES, local employment, social enterprise, affirmative action, promotion of employment for people with disabilities, construction workers.</p>	<p>The Economic, Social and Labour Council is a presidential tripartite advisory body established in 1998. It deals with employment and labour policies and related economic and social policies.</p> <p>The Council includes heads of workers' organizations (4), and the employers' organization (4), the Ministries of Labour and Finance and those who have knowledge and experience of employment.</p>

Country	Political committee	Steering committee	Technical committee	Thematic groups	Tripartite social dialogue committees
Republic of Moldova (2016)		National Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining (NCC).	Working group chaired by the Ministry of Labour and composed of the social partners; development partners; the Ministries of Education, Finance and Economy; sectoral ministries and representatives of local authorities.	Social dialogue platform, under the National Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining. Online consultations. Ten public consultations: three in the capital and seven in the regions.	National Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining.

A learning experience

Learning by doing

With NEP design processes becoming more fully participatory, they become collective learning processes that leave stakeholders better equipped to assess evidenced research and engage fruitfully with each other on employment issues. They also broaden networks, bringing together people who work on issues with a strong bearing on employment – but do not usually interact. The social partners do not, for example, normally engage with ministries of economy and finance. Likewise, ministries of employment do not generally work with central banks or ministries of finance on complex issues such as macroeconomic policies.

Through repeated interactions in working groups and interministerial committees, representatives from different backgrounds with diverse perspectives and different expertise have expanded their capacities. The social partners, in particular, have become better equipped through policy deliberations that go beyond traditional tripartite agendas to include macroeconomic, trade and sectoral policies.

Capacities of stakeholders have also been strengthened through specific partnerships. Some have been between the ministries in charge of employment and the social partners and planning departments (e.g. Burkina Faso, Mali), or bureaus of statistics (e.g. Albania, Cambodia) or universities and research centres (e.g. Tunisia, Mozambique). In some countries, workers' organizations have decided that they lack the technical capacity to participate in in-depth discussions on socio-economic policy. They have therefore recruited consultants and specialists from universities or research centres. In other cases, trade unions have hired professionals to complement their own research team.¹²²

This type of collaboration has helped build capacity on new concepts and issues such as macroeconomic policies, gender or labour market analysis and more generally in addressing employment priorities. Capacity-building also took place through the introduction and application of new tools and methodologies. In Tajikistan, for example, this has involved producing employment targets. Indonesia started using an ILO employment diagnostic methodology, and Morocco replicated the regional action plan design methodology. In both these cases, the government decided to localize the methodology and use it for provincial level development planning across the country.

NEP formulation is also changing the perspectives of stakeholders such as sectoral ministries or decentralized authorities. Often, they are not familiar with employment issues and do not always appreciate the implications of their interventions for employment. Regular interactions with ministries of employment and social partners, however, are showing them that public policies are not 'employment neutral', as well as making them more aware of their own responsibilities with regard to employment.

Much of this is learning by doing, which not only builds capacity on substantive issues, but also enhances ownership and empowerment – as people appreciate the purpose of an NEP as well as their part in it. The more stakeholders understand the NEP process, the better they can participate. And as employment policy processes now involve more regional actors, this also applies at decentralized levels.

Tailor-made capacity-building initiatives

In addition to facilitating dialogue, knowledge building, policy advice and advocacy in the design of employment policies (as analysed above), the ILO is also helping to build capacity. Indeed, capacity-building is a central element of ILO intervention on employment policymaking. This takes various forms. Most countries preparing an NEP have attended the ITC-ILO course on 'Designing effective and inclusive national employment policies'. The course is held annually in Turin for tripartite delegations, including ministries of economy and finance, and comprises lectures on substantive employment policy issues interspersed with questions and debates. Participants strengthen their capacity for critical analysis through practical exercises on employment policy, in which they exchange good practices and learn from other views and new perspectives. This can alter preconceptions and remove distrust, for example from ministries of finance

¹²² "National Employment Policies: A guide for workers' organizations," International Labour Office, Geneva (2015).

towards trade unions, as well as forging ties between national delegations on which they can build when they return home.

This two-week course is useful but can accommodate only a few people from each country. The ILO, therefore, supports national courses on employment policies or training sessions on specific themes for tripartite members and other stakeholder groups. In addition to having a wider outreach, these training activities are also customized and responsive to stakeholders' needs. For example, the NEP course has been translated into Arabic and delivered in Yemen (2013) and Saudi Arabia (2015) as well as in the form of a regional course for the Gulf countries (2014). In Costa Rica (2013), training sessions were organized for government officials and social partners on the links between employment and macroeconomic policies, skills and employment, informal employment and telework. In Mozambique, courses were held on pro-employment macroeconomic policies, labour market information systems and employment policies (2015). In Morocco courses were organized for the tripartite partners on labour market indicators, decent work and informal employment (2013 and 2014). In Tunisia there was training on gender and results-based programming (2018 and 2019). In Rwanda, a series of capacity-building activities on gender, employment policies and mainstreaming employment at national and local levels were held (2018).

The ILO has also helped with specific training sessions that better fit the needs of NEP stakeholders. For example, in 2015-2016, there was a series of capacity-building workshops for trade union federations. These were held in Uganda for Anglophone African countries; in Tunisia for MENA countries; in Kazakhstan for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in Ghana for West African countries, and in Peru for Latin America. Course content and objectives were specifically calibrated for workers' organizations.¹²³ Discussions during the courses have provided opportunities for trade union representatives to present their current and future concerns in the field of employment, and to develop their capacities to analyse and take part in debates and policy formulation. Finally, requests for ILO support to strengthen countries' capacities on employment policies rose during the COVID-19 crisis. In this context a new course was provided in December 2020 that fits the specific needs of countries in response to the crisis.

Peer-to-peer learning

Countries can also share successful experiences through ILO-supported study trips and exchanges of best practices between countries. For example, a delegation from Rwanda went to the Republic of Korea to learn from their experience on integrating employment as a core objective of the planning, budgeting and monitoring process. Similarly, delegations from Burkina Faso and Ghana went to Tanzania to learn about their pilot experience on pro-employment budgeting. In 2017, a high-level delegation of Moldovan institutions participated in a study visit to Romania to learn more about measures to promote entrepreneurship for young people, implementation of active labour market measures, and on-the-job training.

Subregional NEP courses have been organized regularly in Western and Northern Africa and elsewhere to share experiences between countries with similar contexts and problems. Participants involved in training in countries with similar contexts have also been able to exchange views and experiences and explore coordination and synergies.

An NEP design process can take time, but experience shows that time spent in dialogue and building capacities is necessary to ensure that the proposed policy is acceptable to all the interested parties. Such a process also sets up the basis for responding in a timely and effective manner to employment crises.

Deliberative consultations on NEP development take longer than more traditional approaches. In 63 per cent of the 64 countries for which there is information on the length of the process, it took less than two years to develop an NEP, including less than 12 months in 17 of them (Table 3.3). For about 16 per cent of the countries, it took between 2 and 3 years. For the others, it took more than three years. Broad-based and in-depth participation may lengthen the process of policy design, but it has the major advantage of allowing reconciliation of diverging perspectives, reaching agreement, and thus ensuring ownership. Bringing

¹²³ The training sessions were based on the ILO Guide on "National employment policies- A guide for workers' organizations".

together different stakeholders who have a bearing on employment, but often do not interact much with each other, lays the basis for legitimacy of the future strategy and its subsequent success.

Table 4-1 shows that in some countries, the process took between four and five years (e.g. Benin (2020), Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire (2016), Ghana, Mongolia, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Peru, Rwanda, Samoa and Sudan); in certain cases, more than five years (e.g. Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Serbia and Zambia (2019)). Employment policies, just like any public policy, are affected by political vagaries, crises and various events such as presidential elections and frequent changes of government, which can also slow down the formulation process (e.g. Zambia) or postpone adoption (e.g. Malawi). The frequent reshuffling of ministries and political instability that occurs in certain countries also slowed down the formulation process in some cases, e.g. in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mongolia, Sudan and Tunisia. In addition to ministerial reshuffling, certain countries, in particular those in sub-Saharan Africa, are characterized by frequent changes in ministry titles, leading to changes in the responsibilities and organizational structure of central administration departments, with an impact on the duration of the formulation process.

Finally, as mentioned above, the first NEP process might take time, as it involves new ways of working and putting in place the building blocks of an employment framework and system, but it also forges the basis for more responsive processes over the medium term. Indeed, in the current COVID-19 crisis context – which calls for quick employment responses – NEPs can act as a platform to address new employment challenges. For example, in various countries, employment policies currently under formulation with the support of the ILO are being adapted to focus on COVID responses (e.g. Armenia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Paraguay, South Africa and Tunisia). The institutional dimension is also key to providing a resilient and rapid response to crises. In that context, the NEP committees can provide a useful institutional footing for designing and monitoring COVID-19 policy responses. In Ethiopia, for example the crisis did not occur in an 'employment institutional vacuum'. Rather, when the pandemic hit, the Job Creation Commission was officially in place, operational, equipped and bringing together the key employment stakeholders. As such, it provided a critical entry point for political dialogue on the employment dimension of the crisis and was ready to quickly undertake an assessment of the employment impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a response plan.¹²⁴ In China, the name of the NEP committee has been changed to the 'Leadership Committee', as a way of giving it more power to make and implement employment policies in response to the crisis. Three new members – which have a critical importance in the context of the COVID crisis- were added: the National Health Commission, the State Post Office Administration as well as the Ministry of Land and Resources. In addition, a special coordination mechanism was set up with the objective of protecting workers' rights in the new forms of employment.

¹²⁴ See https://www.ilo.org/africa/information-resources/publications/WCMS_747210/lang--en/index.htm

► Chapter 5

Main conclusions

As this report has demonstrated, employment considerations differ from one country to another, but everywhere they are deeply embedded in a wide range of economic and social issues and cannot be discussed in isolation from other policies – for example, agriculture, industry, rural economy and informality. At country level, therefore, there are trade-offs, and sometimes tensions, between competing priorities and the subcomponents of such an integrated approach. These need to be worked out by national actors and within national institutions to ensure that employment policies are tailored to the characteristics of each context and are the result of a specific social and political process. Since responsibility for employment is distributed among many actors and institutions, it is vital to bring all parties to the table to reach a consensus on how best to create decent work in a given context.

The value of such a broad-based approach has been demonstrated over the past two decades of national employment policies and some key lessons learnt can be identified:

- **NEPs can be effective tools for recovery and resilience** – In countries which have already adopted a national employment policy it constitutes an important basis for responding to the crisis. Indeed, NEPs can act as a platform to address new employment challenges and NEP committees can provide a useful institutional basis for designing and monitoring COVID-19 policy responses and recovery strategies.
- **There can be no unique solutions to specific problems** – NEP design processes start with a quantitative and qualitative country analysis, with a view to providing a sound knowledge base for adequate policies, institutional reforms and other interventions aimed at reducing employment deficits. They serve as a starting point and a basis for an informed social dialogue.
- **NEP processes can enhance social dialogue** – NEPs have introduced important changes to social dialogue. Firstly, because solutions addressing employment deficits are multi-dimensional, NEP processes have extended tripartism towards wider socio-economic issues. Second, the number of stakeholders associated with NEP design has grown over the years to embrace the various actors which play a role in shaping employment solutions. At the same time, including more diverse actors, from ministries of finance to minorities and vulnerable groups, these processes have encouraged ownership and shared responsibility. Third, the findings show not only a greater diversity of actors, but also more in-depth engagement, including from ministries of economy and finance, which, in some countries, have started to take the lead in facilitating NEP design and incentivizing other parties to buy-in to NEP processes. Finally, being more consensual than other issues, employment policy processes, in some cases, have served as entry points to revive tripartite social dialogue.
- **New policy forums have emerged** – Since new NEP partners have become involved and the content extends beyond a traditional tripartite agenda, new employment policy forums have emerged, such as tripartite and interministerial committees. Such bodies provide new spaces where stakeholders have an opportunity to raise their voice, but also learn, share and explore employment issues from a variety of viewpoints. They are most effective when chaired by the highest level of government. Indeed, when ministries of employment have not been backed up by higher political support, sustaining coordination throughout the policy cycle has proved difficult.
- **Broader and deeper engagement has taken place** – Over the years, NEPs have moved beyond policymaking as a process conducted by some government officials and consultants, to a more open one where partners are considered as a source of information and expertise. Employment committees have been complemented with other means of securing stakeholder engagement. These include working groups, iterative consultations, political advocacy, strategic partnerships, advisory and technical committees, as well as media and social networks. Experience shows that one approach is generally not enough to create the necessary level of participation by different stakeholders and

integrate citizens' voices. It requires a mix of methods – such as combining 'traditional' consultations with ICT tools or beneficiary surveys. This has improved over the years. Despite progress made, there are still some difficulties in reaching out to some specific groups of stakeholders; and not all interested parties (including informal and rural workers) seem to be equally represented and to have equal opportunities to participate and contribute.

- ▶ **Reaching the regions** – Early employment policies tended to be regionally blind and only represents the 'views of the capital'. Recent employment policy formulations have taken a more territorial approach, bringing decision-making closer to local actors, promoting local participation in employment governance and responding better to local needs.
- ▶ **Political will: A key driver for employment policies** – Strong political commitment is essential to orchestrate a wide range of partners and persuade officials across institutions, not only to participate, but to commit and buy into the need for an NEP. This may take various forms which, in some countries, have been leveraged simultaneously - including advocacy among decision-making bodies as well as informal lobbying of ministerial departments, prime minister's or president's office and development partners. Securing the commitment of ministries of economy and finance, which have stronger decision-making power than ministries of employment, is also key to ensure broader political ownership. The aim should be to build a coalition to endorse employment priorities.
- ▶ **NEPs facilitate collective learning processes** – With NEP processes becoming more participatory, partners have more opportunities to get better acquainted with the key policy measures that constitute an NEP and to gain a better understanding of employment issues. This is a two-way process: stakeholders have emerged from participation processes better equipped to make an effective contribution to employment, while each stakeholder is also enriching the process with its specific knowledge. People also learn from each other and benefit from complementary perspectives and expertise.
- ▶ **Tension between political cycle and time for participation** – Participatory processes are time-consuming. They involve numerous training and awareness-raising activities, as well as collaboration between partners with little previous experience of working together. This means NEP design takes a relatively long time, while an impatient population expects rapid solutions. For employment ministries under political pressure to announce short-term solutions, this can represent a political risk. However, broad-based participation is essential for generating a climate of trust and avoiding conflicts and costly delays, as well as saving time and money by ensuring that the proposed policy is acceptable to all the interested parties.
- ▶ **Managing change is key** – At least as important as producing the final public policies is the NEP design process itself. The design phase can strengthen national institutions, empowering national actors to develop the right solutions, generating mutual trust and understanding, and building a common 'culture of employment', as well as enhancing social dialogue and policy coherence to arrive at shared ownership of employment solutions.
- ▶ **There is no "one size fits all"** – There is no policy model that can claim universal application. Success depends on a complex and significant mix of factors that are not always easy to define. Best practices can provide important lessons, but ultimately each employment policy process is grounded in different governmental institutions, and practice depends on the specific context and political economy of each country

Recommendations on the NEP design process

Some recommendations for future actions on employment policies include:

1. **Also meet short-term needs** – In certain cases, notably in fragile or post-conflict countries, or when the population has high expectations of employment gains, it may be appropriate to meet urgent short-term needs or develop highly targeted, concise and concrete strategies – e.g. Liberia in 2009. Similarly, the COVID-19 employment policy responses need to be implemented within existing policies (i.e. revision of employment policies and programmes in line with the COVID-19 crisis) or through crisis employment strategies. In this context, the ILO should expand its efforts to support more agile

and responsive public policy processes using a design that allows more rapid adjustment to ensure that measures respond and adapt to the changing health circumstances and impact on the economy and labour market (e.g. by focusing on a shorter policy cycle for new strategies or shorter-term targeted measures, with more frequent monitoring).¹²⁵

2. **Improve participation** – Participation costs time and money, not only for government but also for partners; without an immediate and visible impact, people may lose interest or suffer from ‘consultation fatigue’. Organizers of consultations should be looking for new moderation techniques that favour in-depth participation, using innovative methodologies as well as online tools that reach a broader audience. These can help keep stakeholders interested and active throughout the NEP process. The COVID-19 context is making it more important than ever to develop new ways to engage remotely with stakeholders and the public, and to develop new tools for facilitating online consultations and e-participation. In this context, further efforts are needed to develop innovative public policy design, including smart and efficient use of information and communication technologies.
3. **Continue efforts on communication** – Communication around the NEP has evolved over the years, making NEP information more accessible to a wider audience. Nevertheless, still more needs to be done in this area to make communication on NEP easy, digestible, targeted and timely to all parties involved. In particular, the communication efforts still tend to focus on national institutions whereas action may also be needed at regional level.
4. **Support ministries of labour** – Ministries of employment are often near the bottom of the government hierarchy, so must be adequately equipped and funded to take on expanded and more diverse responsibilities. They need to be backed up by high level commitment, and can also be helped by partnerships with higher ranking institutions, such as ministries of finance and economy.
5. **Look beyond the ‘usual suspects’** – Proactively search for the views of those who are willing, but less able to participate in the public debate. Where potentially important parties are known to be harder to reach or less able to participate (such as rural and informal), specific measures may be required to actively seek and ensure their inputs. This could include extension of time limits, further iterations of consultations, simplifying the policy messages or providing specifically tailored opportunities so that they feel more confident to raise their opinion and engage in policy debates.
6. **Increase capacities of social partners** – Despite progress made, there are still knowledge gaps between governments, employers and unions. In particular, the social partners need to be better equipped for participation on socio-economic issues. They should also appreciate the benefit of engaging in the NEP process and the value, for example, of being ready to deliver inputs at the right time. Effective dialogue depends not only on the level of technical preparation, but also on the quality of labour relations. Social partners should also be supported to strengthen their capacities to intervene effectively in discussions, including through social dialogue techniques and efforts to raise awareness about their specific role in NEP processes. In countries where there are social dialogue difficulties, it is important to work on the social dialogue environment before and during the design process. In this context, existing social dialogue committees can play a positive role.
7. **Aim for institutional change** – Most capacity-building is aimed at individuals rather than institutions. Activities are often scattered over time and are usually equated with training rather than with a more complex set of tools for institutional change. Instead there should be an articulated and long-term capacity-building plan directed at changing and reinforcing institutions – with new tools, guidelines and methodologies to enable institutions to deliver the new NEP requirements.

Adopting employment policies is only half the battle.....

The best policy intentions in the world cannot overcome poor policy design. Against that background, this report on ‘two decades of employment policies- Part I: employment policy design’ tries to show how NEPs

¹²⁵ ILO. 2020. “National employment policies for an inclusive, job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis”, Geneva.

are about public policy processes that seek to develop employment responses through an evidence-based approach and broad-based social dialogue. It is first and foremost about assembling evidence to obtain a sense of the size, nature or location of the employment problems through quantitative and qualitative analysis, and including the views, proposals and concerns of NEP stakeholders in the process to arrive at tailor-made policies. This report shows how the NEP design process itself strengthens national institutions and empowers national actors to develop and implement the right solutions, and how it enhances political buy-in, social dialogue and policy coherence to arrive at shared ownership of these solutions. However, designing and adopting policies is only half the battle. Part II of this publication will show the results of such participatory processes and how they shape the content of national employment policies. Finally, Part III will focus on implementation and to what extent employment policies go along with adequate resource allocation, institutions and new ways of working to effectively transform goals into actions and deliver on the NEP requirements.

► Annex 1

► Countries in the study that have ratified the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), followed by the ratification date

Country	Year	Country	Year	Country	Year
Albania	2009	Guinea	1966	Paraguay	1969
Algeria	1969	Honduras	1980	Peru	1967
Armenia	1994	India	1998	Philippines	1976
Azerbaijan	1992	Islamic Republic of Iran	1972	Russian Federation	1967
Barbados	1976	Iraq	1979	Rwanda	2010
Belarus	1968	Jamaica	1975	Senegal	1966
Plurinational State of Bolivia	1977	Jordan	1966	Serbia	2000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1993	Kazakhstan	1999	Sri Lanka	2016
Brazil	1969	Republic of Korea	1992	Sudan	1970
Burkina Faso	2009	Kyrgyzstan	1992	Suriname	1976
Cambodia	1971	Lebanon	1977	Tajikistan	1993
Cameroon	1970	Libya	1971	Thailand	1969
Central African Republic	2006	Madagascar	1966	Togo	2012
Chad	2015	Mali	2016	Trinidad and Tobago	2013
Chile	1968	Mauritania	1971	Tunisia	1966
China	1997	Republic of Moldova	1996	Turkmenistan*	2021
Comoros	1978	Mongolia	1976	Uganda	1967
Costa Rica	1966	Montenegro	2006	Ukraine	1968
Djibouti	1978	Morocco	1979	Uruguay	1977
Dominican Republic	2001	Mozambique	1996	Uzbekistan	1992
Ecuador	1972	Namibia	2018	Viet Nam	2012
El Salvador	1995	Nicaragua	1981	Yemen	1989
Fiji	2010	Niger	2018	Zambia	1979
Gabon	2009	North Macedonia	1991		
Georgia	1993	Panama	1970		
Guatemala	1988	Papua New Guinea	1979		

*The Convention will enter into force for Turkmenistan on 14 April 2022.

Source: ILO NORMLEX. Ratifications of C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), last visited on May 2021.

► Annex 2

Proposals made by the social partners during preparatory workshops on the NEP, and inclusion of these proposals in the NEP and Operational Action Plan in Burkina Faso

► The impact of the participation of the social partners in Burkina Faso

Proposals	Included		
	Not at all	Partially	Fully
Conseil National du Patronat Burkinabé (CNPB)			
Improve flexibility of labour legislation		X	
Reduce social contributions	X		
Develop apprenticeships	X		
Develop work placements and improve monitoring	X		
Strengthen eligibility conditions for training bodies		X	
Facilitate development of temporary work	X		
Develop self-employment			X
Improve information about the labour market		X	
Revitalize productive investment	X		
Strengthen entrepreneurship training		X	
Trade Union Federations - (CGT-B, CNTB, CSB, FO/UNSL, ONSL, USTB) ^(a)			
Improve information on leading employment sectors		X	
Develop fair trade	X		
Assess the EIIP approach		X	
Facilitate access to credit for MSEs and SMEs			X
Support the creation of agricultural and artisanal cooperatives	X		
Evaluate current vocational training programmes		X	
Improve incorporation of regional dimension into training		X	
Ensure the professionalization of vocational training actors		X	
Revise the inter-occupational collective agreement		X	
Regulate recruitment and intermediation agencies		X	
Improve the legal processing of labour disputes		X	
Strengthen labour inspections			X
Improve social dialogue		X	
Strengthen the NOET		X	
Organize annual monitoring and evaluation workshops	X		
Strengthen the NEA and involve trade unions in its activities	X		
Work to ensure the effective involvement of social partners in the NEP		X	
Publicize the NEP		X	
Build the capacities of employment actors (including trade unions)		X	
Improve the definition of the CNEFP ^(b) rules of procedure	X		

Notes: (a) CGT-B: Confédération Générale du Travail du Burkina (General Labour Federation of Burkina Faso); CNTB: Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Burkina (National Confederation of Workers of Burkina Faso); CSB: Confédération Syndicale Burkinabè (Trade Union Confederation of Burkina Faso); FO/UNSL: Force Ouvrière/Union Nationale des Syndicats Libres (Force Ouvrière/National Union of Free Trade Unions); ONSL: Organisation Nationale des Syndicats Libres (National Organization of Free Trade Unions); USTB: Union Syndicale des Travailleurs du Burkina Faso (Trade Union of Workers of Burkina Faso).

(b) CNEFP: Conseil National de l'Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle (National Council for Employment and Vocational Training).

Sources: Yves Bourdet. Politique Nationale de l'Emploi du Burkina Faso (2008); Plan d'Action Opérationnel (PAO) pour la mise en œuvre de la PNE (2008); Les centrales syndicales du Burkina Faso (2006) Rapport de synthèse de l'atelier préparatoire du Forum National sur la Politique Nationale de l'Emploi au Burkina Faso; Conseil National du Patronat Burkinabé (2006) Observations et contributions du CNPB pour l'élaboration de la Politique Nationale de l'Emploi (PNE).

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The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

Contact details

International Labour Organization
Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

**Employment, Labour Market and
Youth Branch**

E: emplab@ilo.org